

KERIDES THE THINKER

Murder mysteries
set in ancient
Egypt... as
heard on
**IMAGINATION
THEATER**



THE COLLECTED SCRIPTS
Volume Two: Episodes 9-15
written by
CLAIRE BARTLETT and IAIN McLAUGHLIN

KERIDES THE THINKER

THE COLLECTED SCRIPTS

VOLUME TWO

EPISODES 9 – 15

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KERIDES THE THINKER

created by

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and

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FOR IMAGINATION THEATER

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KERIDES THE THINKER

Introduction by Iain McLaughlin

By the time we came to write the scripts in this collection, Kerides and Adrea were well established both with the audience and with us as writers. Ulrich Dihle and Andrea Schenckan, along with all the regulars in the cast, were cemented in our minds as their characters. As writers we were comfortable that we had a handle on all of these characters, of whom I have to admit we have become very fond.

Since we started the series, we had been working to a long term plan for Kerides. We felt that after eight episodes it was time to start kicking on with that plan. Around this time, we got an email from director and producer Larry Albert saying he thought it was time for Adrea to become less of an attitude on legs. That wasn't exactly how Larry put it – he's far more eloquent than that – but the gist was that it was time for Adrea to evolve and grow up. This tied in completely with what we were planning. We had already done eight episodes and in those we had started to hint at a relationship slowly developing between Kerides and Adrea, despite the fact that neither of them seemed to know it was happening. We thought enough time had passed that they would begin to grow and change a little. They would become more confident and they would start coming to terms with the fact that there was a real spark between them.

The spark for this evolution in their lives had to be Adrea. She's the real energy in the relationship and she was the one on the most obvious personal journey. The growing Kerides had done already was down to his relationship with Adrea; with having responsibility for her wellbeing and future and for the first stirrings of romance in his logical head. Adrea was the key, so we decided to really work on her in these episodes.

We put her through a lot...

One thing you might notice is that we pare back on character descriptions in the cast list as we go through the scripts. I think we did that because we felt everybody knew their characters so well, and only really gave any detail on new characters,

KERIDES THE THINKER

THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

by Iain McLaughlin & Claire Bartlett

first aired 13th May 2012

CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES: Early 20s, exceptionally bright in many ways but also a bit innocent in some of the ways of the world. His years of travelling and learning haven't prepared him for Alexandria. A good heart, honest. Gets excited when the ideas are flowing.

ADREA: 18 or 19. Pretty, feisty and when we first meet her, a slave. She's intelligent, knows the city and all of the gossip in it. She likes a good moan.

MENTEP: A Vizier at the court of Pharaoh Ptolemy II. He's old and widely respected. Anyone who takes his age for a sign of weakness makes a huge mistake. A very astute man.

MARAK: A captain in the Palace Guard, a rival of Kerides. Unpleasant, arrogant.

FX: FEET SHUFFLING.

ADREA: Kerides?

MENTEP: No, my dear. Just an old man.

ADREA: Vizier Mentep. I thought. I thought you might be...

MENTEP: Kerides? I think you hoped it would be him. I'm sorry to disappoint you.

ADREA: I'm supposed to say 'you're never a disappointment' or something now, aren't I?

MENTEP: Much too often, people tell us what we should say. I have always appreciated that you say what you really think.

ADREA: Really?

MENTEP: Honesty is very rare - especially in the sort of situations Kerides finds himself in. Where is Kerides, by the way?

ADREA: I... I'm not sure. He didn't come home with me. I don't think we're talking right now. We... we had a sort of a disagreement.

MENTEP: Quite a public one, so I hear.

ADREA: You heard?

MENTEP: News travels fast in Alexandria - especially to an old busybody like me. Would you like to talk about it?

ADREA: I'm being a terrible host. I haven't offered you wine or anything to eat. Would you like...

MENTEP: (INTERRUPTING GENTLY)
...to talk about it? Thank you. I believe I would.

ADREA: You're not going to let me off the hook with this, are you?

MENTEP: My dear, I have General Karnak waiting to find out what happened. He's as big a busybody as me - but he's not nearly as gifted at gossiping. Now why don't you tell me what happened? Please?

ADREA: Do I have to?

MENTEP: I've never known you hold back from saying what you think before. Between you and me, as a politician, I rarely hear such honest speaking, and I appreciate it enormously.

ADREA: I don't think Kerides appreciated me saying what I think today.

MENTEP: No. Perhaps sometimes it's better...

ADREA: ...to actually think before I speak?

MENTEP: It would hardly be kind for me to say so.

ADREA: But it would be honest to say what you think.

MENTEP: This is an occasion when I will think before I speak.

ADREA: You're not going to play word games with me, are you?

MENTEP: I wouldn't dream of it. Now please tell me... what happened?

ADREA: It was dinner. Or it would have been. I asked Kerides to go to the market to buy some things.

MENTEP: And he objected?

ADREA: Not at all. He agreed and off he went. He said he wouldn't be long. I didn't need any of the things I asked him to get - I just wanted him out of the house for a little while.

MENTEP: Dare I ask why?

ADREA: What? You think I have another man? Oh, no. One is more than enough trouble. I sorry - I didn't mean...

MENTEP: No offence taken. I've been married a long time. Carry on, my dear.

ADREA: You see, today is special. It's six months since we moved into this house. Half a year. I wanted to make something nice. To celebrate.

MENTEP: What did Kerides think of that?

ADREA: It was going to be a surprise for him. Actually it would have been nice if it hadn't been a surprise and he'd worked out that it was six months for himself but he didn't. You know, he's clever but some things just sail right by him. Is that normal for really smart people?

MENTEP: Are you trying to change the subject?

ADREA: Yes. And I'm usually good at it. I just wanted Kerides out of the house so that I could prepare the food, get myself ready and we could have a nice night celebrating.

MENTEP: What went wrong?

ADREA: If I say 'everything' is that enough?

MENTEP: What do you think?

ADREA: I think you look like the nicest old man in the world but when you bite into something you're like a crocodile and you don't let go.

MENTEP: Sounds about right - and you're trying to distract me again.

ADREA: Oh, all right. I cooked everything, got it all ready. Then I put on my best dress and prettiest sandals...

MENTEP: And?

ADREA: And nothing.

MENTEP: Nothing?

ADREA: I waited for hours. He didn't come home. I thought he was taking his time in the market, then I wondered if he had been attacked or got talking with the philosophers. He can talk with them for hours. Or maybe it just seems like hours. Anyway, it got late, dark.

MENTEP: And you were worried about him.

ADREA: Yes. He doesn't know the city the way I do. So I went out to look for him and almost straight away I heard that there had been a murder at the gold merchants and I just knew he would be there.

MENTEP: So you went there?

ADREA: You know I did.

MENTEP: And?

ADREA: You know how bad you think it might have been? It was worse. I had to push my way past some guards to even get in. And those guards really need to be talked to about letting me get past them.

MENTEP: I'll tell General Karnak. As soon as you finish your tale.

ADREA: The merchant's store was full of soldiers. Soldiers, gold, a dead body. And it wasn't Kerides, before you ask There had been two partners in the merchant's business. One of them, Ryner, was dead. The back of his skull had been bashed in.

MENTEP: And Kerides was there.

ADREA: Yes. With a captain of the guard, Marak. They weren't getting along...

FX: FADE IN SHOP SOUNDS.

MARAK: This is an investigation for the Palace Guard.

KERIDES: I know. I work for General Karnak.

ADREA: Kerides. Kerides, there you are.

KERIDES: Adrea, what are you doing here?

ADREA: I could say the same to you.

KERIDES: There's been a murder. The merchants supply gold to Pharaoh's palace so I thought I should help investigate.

MARAK: We don't need any help. And who is this... person?

KERIDES: This is Adrea. She's my... my... well, she's with me. There's the body, Adrea. You can see how the skull has been smashed in at the back.

MARAK: And his partner was found almost unconscious beside the body with a golden eagle in his grip. The eagle was covered with blood. Obviously the murder weapon.

KERIDES: I agree.

MARAK: Then why are you keeping us here when we could be taking this killer away for interrogation?

KERIDES: Because something isn't right. Something just doesn't add together. Kyros being found here almost unconscious for one thing.

MARAK: You haven't been in many fights, have you?

KERIDES: No.

ADREA: But he's to get some practice soon enough.

MARAK: Usually both people in a fight get hurt. It's not a surprise at all. If that's the best you have, I'm taking him to be interrogated properly.

ADREA: Good. So we can go home.

KERIDES: No, something's not right here.

ADREA: You're not kidding.

KERIDES: What do you mean?

ADREA: What's not right is I ask you to run a simple errand and you can't even buy fruit without it turning into a murder.

KERIDES: It's my job, Adrea.

ADREA: What about my job?

KERIDES: Your job?

ADREA: My job! Looking after you. Cleaning, washing your clothes, cooking - cooking special meals that get ruined because you don't come home.

KERIDES: I have no idea what you're talking about.

MARAK: Men, take the merchant to the palace for interrogation.

KERIDES: I'm not finished.

MARAK: Yes you are, boy. Completely finished. If you can't even control your woman you have no place in the palace guard.

KERIDES: Wait...

MARAK: Men, lock this building. And you boy, you back to your scrolls. Go back to your woman. Just go away. you're not fit to be with the palace guard.

FX: FOOTSTEPS MARCH AWAY.

ADREA: Kerides?

KERIDES: Leave me alone.

ADREA: Kerides?

KERIDES: Just leave me alone!

FX: STOMPING FOOTSTEPS, DOOR SLAMS.

FIRST COMMERCIAL

ADREA: I wasn't joking Vizier Mentep. It didn't go well.

MENTEP: You have a gift for understatement.

ADREA: I don't know why he went and got so annoyed. It's no different than the way I talk to him all the time.

MENTEP: But he didn't react the way he usually does.

ADREA: He doesn't usually go stomping off to who knows where.

MENTEP: But usually he hasn't just been humiliated in front of the people he is supposed to work with.

ADREA: Marak?

MENTEP: Captain Marak is an ambitious sort of fellow. He will see Kerides as competition for any advancement or promotion in the Guard. And he will look for any chance to embarrass Kerides.

ADREA: And I gave him that.

MENTEP: I'm afraid so.

ADREA: Am I really so mean to him? All the time? Really?

MENTEP: That's not for me to answer, is it, child?

ADREA: I don't mean to be mean. It's just... it's just... I know don't know what it is.

MENTEP: Really?

ADREA: When I was a slave, I had to fight for everything. I never knew my parents. I might as well have been a dog the way some of the other slaves treated me. They weren't being cruel on purpose - they were just protecting themselves, making sure they did their jobs properly so they wouldn't get into trouble. They didn't have time, so to me they seemed cruel. And I guess, I saw that as the how I should defend myself.

MENTEP: Even now you're not a slave?

ADREA: Now more than ever. I don't know what a free person is supposed to do.

MENTEP: When you were a slave, who did you have to care about?

ADREA: I had to look after my owner, make sure his house was clean and...

MENTEP: No. Who did you actually care about? Your mother? Father? Who?

ADREA: I never knew my parents. I only had to care for myself. And maybe some other slaves who were kinder than others.

MENTEP: But now? What about Kerides?

ADREA: What about him?

MENTEP: You don't care about him?

ADREA: Well...

MENTEP: I'm not surprised if you don't. He must be terrible to live with. Scrolls everywhere.

ADREA: I could spend my whole day tidying the parchments he leaves lying around.

MENTEP: And forgetful. Once he's in a good debate with the philosophers or reading at the library... so selfish...

ADREA: He could be there all day. And all night.

MENTEP: When he's late on those nights you must go to sleep so angry with him.

ADREA: I can't sleep when he's out there late at night. What if he gets attacked? Having a huge brain doesn't mean he won't get beaten on the head by a robber.

MENTEP: So, do you still care for nobody but yourself?

ADREA: I have to go and find him.

MENTEP: I thought you might.

FX: ADREA'S HURRYING FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: There's wine, food, help yourself to anything.

FX: SCUFFING OF FEET.

ADREA: One thing before I go.

FX: RUNS BACK. A HUG.

ADREA: Thank you.

MENTEP: I'm sure hugging the Vizier is against the law but I'll make an exception this time.

ADREA: Thank you.

FX: RUNNING FEET.

MENTEP: Now... I think I might have that wine after all.

FX: LOW CRACKLING FIRE. DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

ADREA: Kerides? Kerides, are you here?

FX: FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: Kerides?

FX: FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: Kerides? I was sure you would be...

KERIDES: Adrea?

FX: ADREA YELPS!

ADREA: Kerides! What are you doing skulking in the dark?

KERIDES: I'm thinking.

ADREA: Couldn't you think with a little more light?

KERIDES: This is the scene of a crime. The gold merchant was murdered here. Marak ordered the shop locked.

ADREA: You're not scared of him?

KERIDES: No. I just... I just don't want to see him right now. What are you doing here?

ADREA: That's the second time today you asked me that.

KERIDES: In the same place.

ADREA: Same answer. I was looking for you.

KERIDES: How did you know where to find me?

ADREA: You always taken about criminals going back to the place of their crime. This felt like a good place to start.

KERIDES: The place of their crime? That's it. You're absolutely right. It is all about the place where the crime was committed.

ADREA: It is? You don't have to sound so pleased about it.

KERIDES: A terrible thing was done here, Adrea.

ADREA: I know.

KERIDES: A trust was broken.

ADREA: There's no need to rub it in. I didn't mean to be the way I was.

KERIDES: A good man was betrayed.

ADREA: Look, I'm trying to say sorry for what happened.

KERIDES: And we're to believe he was murdered by his partner.

ADREA: Oh, come on. I didn't...

(beat as she realises they're talking different subjects)

And you're talking about the murder, aren't you?

KERIDES: Yes. Obviously. What did you think I was talking about?

ADREA: Mentep was right. You are selfish!

KERIDES: What? When did Mentep say that?

ADREA: I'm over here trying to apologize for what I did and you're not even having the same conversation as me!

KERIDES: I'm trying to solve a murder.

ADREA: And what if you get murdered?

KERIDES: I'll probably get more peace and quiet?

ADREA: What?

KERIDES: Oh, that was really the wrong thing to say, wasn't it?

ADREA: I was worried you might be dead on the street, and you make a stupid joke?
Mentep's wrong - why should I care about you so much?

KERIDES: (QUIETLY)
Adrea, be quiet.

ADREA: Don't you dare say that...

KERIDES: Adrea...

ADREA: You just...

FX: A KISS. TAKING ADREA BY SURPRISE.

ADREA: You kissed me! You... you... you KISSED me!

KERIDES: Yes. I did, didn't I?

ADREA: You're not sure?

KERIDES: Oh, I'm sure. And I enjoyed it, too.

ADREA: Did you?

KERIDES: Yes. And I'm going to do it again.

ADREA: Am I entitled to any say in this?

KERIDES: Of course.

ADREA: Well, I say... I say... I say 'what took you so long?'

KERIDES: You don't mind?

ADREA: Do I sound like I mind?

KERIDES: No. But you could be trying to make me drop my defences so you can hit me with

something.

ADREA: Only with this.

FX: KISS. AND NOBODY TAKEN BY SURPRISE THIS TIME.
DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

MARAK: Well, what have we here?

KERIDES: Captain Marak. I heard you had thrown the woman aside. I see she has you back under her heel. Why am I not surprised?

SECOND COMMERCIAL

KERIDES: Captain Marak. Adrea often helps with my investigations.

MARAK: I won't ask what you're investigating. I ordered this shop locked.

KERIDES: I know. But I work for General Karnak and I will do my duty.

MARAK: So you have a backbone after all. Carry on. Feel free to investigate - if you have to waste time investigating such an obvious crime it will reflect on you not me.

KERIDES: You think what happened is obvious?

MARAK: You don't?

ADREA: No, we don't.
(BEAT)
Do we, Kerides?

KERIDES: I'm not sure, Adrea. Perhaps if the Captain takes us through what he is sure happened...

MARAK: It's a waste of time. But if it means I'll be rid of you... very well. Ryner and Kyros were always arguing over business - they had been arguing for years.

KERIDES: You mentioned that earlier. Please continue.

MARAK: For a reason we will learn from Kyros under torture, an argument turned to violence and they fought.

KERIDES: Where?

MARAK: In this room, obviously.

KERIDES: Oh, obviously. I'm sorry. Go on.

MARAK: They fought across to this work area against the wall, and Kyros beat his partner over the head with a golden statue.

KERIDES: And we know the statue was the murder weapon?

MARAK: Obviously. It was covered with blood.

KERIDES: And there were flakes of gold in the wound on Ryner's skull. Yes, I remember. What of Kyros?

MARAK: Ryner had defended himself well and in the struggle Kyros was dazed, which was how we found him.

KERIDES: Does he admit to any of this?

MARAK: No. But I wouldn't expect him to. He claims he was struck from behind and was only just waking when my men arrived in the shop. But criminals have been employing a tactic for years. You may not have heard of it in your libraries, but it's called telling lies.

KERIDES: I have heard of it.

ADREA: Why are you letting him talk to you like that, Kerides? I'm the only person who talks to you like that and gets away with it. And you know it's only bluster and noise from me.

KERIDES: It's all right, Adrea. I have to admit that the Captain's explanation is very neat.

ADREA: You do?

MARAK: (OOZING SARCASM)
I'm so glad it meets with your approval. I will sleep well in my bed knowing that you agree with me.

KERIDES: I said it was neat. I didn't say that I agree with it, and it's certainly not what happened.

MARAK: What are you talking about?

KERIDES: The only part you got right was that Ryner was murdered with the eagle statue.

MARAK: Really?

KERIDES: For one thing, the statue isn't made of gold.

ADREA: But you said flakes of gold were found in the skull.

KERIDES: I did. But the statue for Pharaoh should have been solid gold - and solid gold doesn't flake in that way. On the other hand, if another metal - let's say lead - is covered with a gold coating, that coating would flake.

ADREA: Pharaoh's statue was a fake?

KERIDES: Yes.

ADREA: You'd think they'd have someone check things like that, wouldn't you?

KERIDES: They do. Everything is inspected before a gift like this is presented to Pharaoh.

ADREA: So whoever inspected the eagle was in on the plan to give Pharaoh a fake, right? Nope. Wrong. I can tell from your face.

KERIDES: I'm sorry, Adrea. There had to be a real gold statue or this doesn't make sense.

ADREA: It's not making sense to me anyway. But don't let that stop you. It never does.

KERIDES: I'll come back to the statue in a moment. Marak, you said there was a fight in this room - but apart from a few parchments on the floor nothing heavy has been moved, the way it would if two men had fought through the room. Don't you find that strange, Captain?

MARAK: No. It's a large room. They wouldn't necessarily have bumped into anything.

KERIDES: Possibly not. But the body of Ryner was found here, by the wall. And this is why the words the place of the crime were so important, Adrea. You finally let me see what was wrong.

ADREA: I did? Oh.
(BEAT)
Just remind me, how did I do that?

KERIDES: When you said 'the place of the crime'. It all became so obvious. The wound was on the left side of Ryner's skull, coming from left to right.

MARAK: So?

KERIDES: For the blow to have come that way, it had to be performed by someone left handed, and Kyros was found with the statue in his right hand. And they were so close to the wall, so even if he tried to swing the statue he would have struck his hand on the wall.

The blow had to be delivered left handed. With enough force to crush the skull.

ADREA: So if the statue was found in his right hand... someone put it there?

KERIDES: Someone trying to make it seem as if these men had fought.

MARAK: So you believe Kyros's story that he was attacked from behind.

KERIDES: Oh, it's true. It's the only explanation that makes sense. I have no doubt you'll find that he was struck by someone left handed as well.

MARAK: That changes things. I don't like admitting it but... good work.

KERIDES: Thank you.

MARAK: I should go back to the palace and have my men stop interrogating Kyros.

KERIDES: But there's still so much we haven't cleared up. Like who committed the murder.

ADREA: And what happened to the gold eagle - you said you'd come back to that.

KERIDES; I did, didn't I?

MARAK: It's obvious, isn't it? Ryner had an accomplice, someone who would take the golden eagle and sell it somewhere else once the original...

ADREA; The fake?

MARAK: ...was in Pharaoh's palace.

KERIDES: It sounds right. In fact I'm sure it's right.

MARAK: I'll have guards scour the city to find the villain.

KERIDES: That would be wise.

MARAK: I'll see to it now.

KERIDES: It would be wise but I think it will be a waste of time.

ADREA: You think he left the city already?

KERIDES: What was it you said earlier, Adrea?

ADREA: When? I tend speak a lot. Could you narrow it down a bit?

KERIDES: About coming back...

ADREA: That... you told me a criminal always comes back to the place of his crime.

KERIDES: And it's true. Sometimes it's to gloat, or to make sure they didn't leave any clues. And sometimes it's to pick up something they couldn't collect when they committed the crime. Now, I came back here to examine the facts. Adrea, you came here to find me... and I'm really glad you did, by the way.

ADREA: So am I. I didn't expect the kiss, though.

KERIDES: Neither did I... I hope I did it all right.

ADREA: Oh, it was good. Not that I've had practice.

KERIDES: Nor me. It just felt... it feels like maybe we should save this conversation for later.

ADREA: Oh, yes. Good idea.

KERIDES: We know why we're here. Why did you come back, Captain?

MARAK: What kind of stupid question is that? To investigate the scene of the crime.

KERIDES: Even though you already have your murderer in custody? You were so convinced it was Kyros, why would you come back?

MARAK: To do my job.

KERIDES: Adrea, look at this bracelet. It's beautiful.

ADREA: It's lovely. Solid gold... no, we can't afford it.

KERIDES: Pity. It would look good on you. Captain, catch.

FX: CATCHING.

KERIDES: Good catch.

MARAK: What stupidity...

KERIDES: In your left hand.

ADREA: He's left handed?

KERIDES: So it would seem. I wonder if we should get some of General Karnak's troops to go through this shop looking for the gold statue? That's why you came back tonight, isn't it,

Marak? You and Ryner had a deal to swap a fake statue for the real golden eagle but you didn't want to share the profit. So you killed him and tried to make it look like his partner Kyros had killed him instead. You even had a back-up explanation in case the switch was uncovered - the mystery accomplice. But he doesn't exist. You did it all - and the statue is still in this shop.

MARAK: I have no idea what you are talking about - and you have no proof.

ADREA: Of course he does. Tell him, Kerides.

KERIDES: Actually, I don't. None at all.

ADREA: What?

MARAK: Then we're finished here.

KERIDES: I don't have any proof, but when I take my findings to General Karnak, the suspicion of you will fill the Palace. You will be finished in the Palace Guard.

ADREA: Vizier Mentep said you were ambitious. Well, this will be the end of your ambitions.

KERIDES: It won't be full justice for your crimes but for now it's enough.

MARAK: It's nothing...

FX: SWORD DRAWN.

MARAK: ...if you're dead.

KERIDES: You may have a point.

ADREA: The sword certainly does.

MARAK: I'll deal with you once he's dead.

KERIDES: Adrea, run.

ADREA: And leave you?

KERIDES: Just go.

FX: FOOTSTEPS.

MARAK: You're braver than I thought.

KERIDES: That's probably not too hard.

FX: SHUFFLING FOOTSTEPS.

MARAK: Stand still and I'll make it quick.

KERIDES: I have to give Adrea time.

MARAK: Oh, I'll find her quickly enough.

KERIDES: No need.

FX: CRASH OF A SMASHING POT.

ADREA: I found you first.
(BEAT)
Oh.

KERIDES: Oh?

ADREA: I found the eagle as well. It was in the pot I clonked him with. I thought it was heavy.

KERIDES: We better tie him and then get General Karnak.

ADREA: And Vizier Mentep. If he mentions hugging - ignore it.

KERIDES: And then I think we probably need to talk.

ADREA: Talk... yes, talk... about...

FX: KISS.

ADREA: Good conversation.

KERIDES: Things are going to change.

ADREA: In what way?

KERIDES: No more insulting me. And I'll have the last word.

ADREA: Kerides?

KERIDES: Yes?

ADREA: Shut up.

FX: KISS

KERIDES: Good conversation.

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THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

Notes

The first kiss!

And about time!

There we go. They've had their first kiss and they're a couple. That was the main part of the plot on this one. This was the story where their relationship actually became clear in their minds as being 'a relationship' rather than 'we know there's something going on between us but we're not sure what'.

The murder in this one was almost secondary but in the end it played very well into what we were planning. Making the villain Kerides' rival also offered the perfect chance for us to build a bit of tension between Kerides and Adrea before we get to the smooching.

Setting the kissing aside, it was important that they were both seen to be developing as characters in this story. For Adrea it's far more obvious that it's happening. She becomes aware that her snarky comments actually do have repercussions and through the conversation she has with Mentep she is able to pull together how she feels about those repercussions, about the changes in her life and the fact that she actually does care about people, Mentep being one and more importantly, she realizes that she genuinely cares for Kerides. We mulled having that sequence as an inner monologue where she had a conversation with herself but it didn't really fit with Kerides. We also thought that if she opened up to Mentep, it was a sign that she was growing enough as a person and she felt able to talk with someone she trusted and cared about. Her relationship with Mentep is important for her. He fills the role of family for both Adrea and Kerides but more so for Adrea. That's a theme we'll return to later in the series.

For Kerides the growth was that for the first time, he didn't just accept Adrea's comments. He got annoyed and stood up for himself with her. He's an easygoing sort of lad but we wanted that moment of 'enough is enough', and we put some extra sauce on it by having his rival bait him over it. For all his knowledge and intelligence, Kerides doesn't know much about romance. His emotions with Adrea are a bit of a new departure for him but her barbs, in front of a rival, really hurt because people were seeing him insulted by someone he cared about so damn much. The other big step was that he instigated that kiss. That's not something he'd have been brave enough to do in earlier episodes. He's growing up. They both are, and they're doing it together. The growing up, I mean. If you thought I meant anything else by 'doing it together' – wash your mind out with soap and water. They don't do *that* for episodes yet...

KERIDES THE THINKER

THE MOTHER OF ALL CRIMES

by Iain McLaughlin & Claire Bartlett

first aired 16th September 2012

CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES:

ADREA:

MENTEP:

KARNAK: Head of the Palace Guard. A no-nonsense cop of his day. Harsh but fair. He and Karnak are old friends despite their differences.

AMARNA: Female slave, 40s, similar temperament to Adrea,

JUDGE: Dishes out justice at the court. Important and he knows it.

GUARD: A few lines..

FX: MARKET DAY IN ALEXANDRIA. BUSY, HECTIC.

ADREA: (HAPPY, EXHUBERANT)
Isn't this...?

KERIDES: Busy?

ADREA: No, I was thinking... alive. Bright. Lively. Wonderful.

KERIDES: I know you like market day but I didn't think you liked it that much, Adrea.

ADREA: It's not just the market, Kerides. It's... it's life. Us. You know... you and me...
you remember the kissing stuff?

KERIDES: Oh, I remember. Believe me, I remember.

ADREA: Me too. You know, you could hold my hand. If you wanted.

KERIDES: In public?

ADREA: Are you ashamed to be seen with an ex-slave?

KERIDES: No, no. I just thought you might be embarrassed.

ADREA: Well, maybe a little. But I'll risk it if you will.

KERIDES: All right. Adrea, I would be honoured if you took my hand.

ADREA: I believe I will.

(BEAT)
You know, Heptera will go out of her mind about this.

KERIDES: About what?

ADREA: About us being an 'us'. She's been saying since we rented the house that
something is going on. And finally she's right.

KERIDES: Adrea, I've studied a lot of things... but I never studied anything about...
relationships and things...

ADREA: You're smart, you'll work it out. Besides, I don't know what we're doing either
so we can find out together. And for once you won't know everything before I do.

KERIDES: You like that idea, don't you?

ADREA: Let me think about that... I thought about it. Yes, I like that. I like it a lot.

KERIDES: Well, there's nobody else I want to study with.

ADREA: Good answer. You know what I want to see in the market today?

KERIDES: No, what?

ADREA: Everything.

FX: A DISTURBANCE BUILDS NEARBY.

KERIDES: What's that?

ADREA: Oh, there's always something going on in the market.

GUARD: (MID DISTANCE)
Stop her.

ADREA: Must be a crook stealing something.

KERIDES: Really?

GUARD: That way! There she is.

ADREA: (STRIDENT – LIKE BEFORE THEY BECAME AN ITEM)
Kerides, no.
(SOFTENING)
I mean, Kerides, please. don't get involved. The market is full of guards. Let them deal with it.

KERIDES: All right. I suppose I should let the guards do their jobs. Besides, it is my day off.

ADREA: Thank you. Ooh, there she goes. It's just one woman.

KERIDES: A slave by the look of her. There's something familiar about her.

ADREA: You know her?

KERIDES: No. It must be my imagination.

ADREA: Good. I didn't think you were interested in older women. She must be forty at

least.

GUARD: Don't let her get away.

ADREA: I don't think there's any chance of that. They're coming at her from all sides.

KERIDES: They have her trapped.

ADREA: She must have done something really bad to have this many guards after her,

KARNAK: She did.

KERIDES: General Karnak.

KARNAK: Why am I not surprised to find you involved in this, Thinker?

ADREA: He's not involved. We're just out walking in the market.

KARNAK: And holding hands, I see.

ADREA: Yes. And holding hands.

KARNAK: I heard she had finally snared you, Thinker. I owe Mentep five gold coins. I was sure you would hold out longer.

ADREA: You had a bet on Kerides and me?

KARNAK: A lot of the guard did. I think Mentep cheated somehow but I can't think how.

ADREA: Kerides, did you know about this?

KERIDES: No. Nothing.

ADREA: I thought you knew everything.

KARNAK: I can't stand here chatting all day. I have work to do.

KERIDES: What did she do?

KARNAK: The slave? She murdered her master at his villa then tried to flee the city - not very well. Bring her here.

FX: WOMAN (AMARNA) DRAGGED FORWARD, GASPING FOR AIR.

KARNAK: Amarna, did you really think you would get away with murdering Halke?

AMARNA: I did what I did.

KARNAK: Take her to the palace cells. don't worry, you won't be there long. You'll be executed soon enough.

FX: AMARNA DRAGGED AWAY.

ADREA: General Karnak, Did you say her name is Amarna?

KARNAK: That's right. She belonged to Halke, a merchant from Carthage. Stabbed him through the heart and sat with him while he died. He should have stayed in Carthage. It would have saved me a lot of papyrus-work. Until later.

KERIDES: Goodbye, General.

ADREA: Kerides, do something.

KERIDES: I don't understand.

ADREA: You have to help that woman.

KERIDES: You told me not to get involved.

ADREA: Please, just help her. You can't let her be executed.

KERIDES: If she killed someone...

ADREA: I don't care what she did.

KERIDES: Adrea? Who is she?

ADREA: I think... I think she's my mother.

FIRST COMMERCIAL

KERIDES: The slave? The murderer? She's your mother?

ADREA: I think she might be.

KERIDES: But you never knew your mother. You were sold to different owners when you were a baby. How can you...

ADREA: Her name. How many people have you met called Amarna?

KERIDES: Well, until today, none.

ADREA: Exactly. It's not exactly a common name. In fact it's not really a name at all.

KERIDES: It's a name but the name of a city, not a person. It was...

ADREA: Egypt's capital city for a few weeks hundreds of years ago.

KERIDES: That's right. How did you know?

ADREA: You think I wouldn't find out about my mother?

KERIDES: Ahkenaten was an unusual Pharaoh. He abandoned the traditional Gods and his Capital city Thebes to create a new capital and religion...

ADREA: ...in Amarna. I know and I don't care. If she's my mother you have to help her.

KERIDES: I don't know what I can do.

ADREA: What you always do. Look at things. Find clues nobody sees. Half the time I think you make it up. Please, Just help her.
Please.
For me.

KERIDES: All right. I'll talk to her.

FX: FLICKERING TORCH. WET DRIPS - A DUNGEON. METAL DOOR CREAKS
OPEN.

KERIDES: It's all right, Guard. You can leave.

GUARD: My orders say to stay.

ADREA: Kerides?

KERIDES: Guard, I'm giving you new orders.

GUARD: I don't know about that.

ADREA: Listen, do you know who he is? Do you know how important he is to Vizier Mentep?

GUARD: Well...

ADREA: And how he was personally appointed to the Palace Guard by General Karnak?

GUARD: Well, yes.

ADREA: So?

GUARD: Well, to be honest, we're more scared of you than we are of him.

ADREA: What?

GUARD: I'll be outside.

ADREA: What did you say? Kerides, did you hear what he said?

KERIDES: Never mind that - at least he left us alone.

ADREA: You're right. But I'll fix him later. Do you think they really are more scared of me than you?

KERIDES: I don't think this is really the time to discuss that, do you?

ADREA: No. You're probably right. But would you think I was a coward if I told you I was nervous about this?

KERIDES: I'd be amazed if you weren't. Go and see her.

ADREA: All right.

FX: FOOTSTEPS ON STONE. CHAINS CLANK SOFTLY.

ADREA: Hello. Are you awake? Are you conscious? Kerides, have they tortured her?

KERIDES: I don't know.

AMARNA: No. I have not been tortured. But it will come. Is that why you are here?

ADREA: No.

AMARNA: Then why are you here?

ADREA: To find out what happened.

AMARNA: The guards will tell you.

ADREA: I'm not asking the guards.

AMARNA: They have already decided what has happened. I have nothing to say. Just put me

on trial and have my execution done with.

ADREA: You want to be executed?

AMARNA: It's going to happen. I see no reason to delay it.

KERIDES: Did you kill this man, Halke?

AMARNA: Do the guards say I did?

KERIDES: They say you were alone with him in his house, that he was stabbed in his bed, that you stayed with him till he died and then you ran.

AMARNA: If that is what they say, then that is how it must have been.

KERIDES: Was Halke cruel to you? He had a reputation as a gentle, kind man. Did he attack you?

ADREA: Kerides, this is...

KERIDES: We talked about this.
(GENTLY)
You wanted the truth, remember.

ADREA: I remember.

KERIDES: So I can't be gentle with her. She won't talk. I don't know if she's guilty or just frightened but we need her to talk.

ADREA: All right.

KERIDES: Amarna, if you don't speak to defend yourself, you will be executed for murder. Do you know how you will die?
(NO ANSWER)
Do you?

AMARNA: Does it matter how it is done?

KERIDES: You will care. You may be thrown into a snake pit or beheaded, or if the judge thinks your crime particularly vile you will be forced into the brazen bull. You have lived in Carthage, you should know what that means. You will be placed inside a large hollow brass bull and a fire set under it to cook you alive.

ADREA: Don't you even want to defend yourself?
(NO ANSWER)
Is there anyone who will speak for you?
(NO ANSWER)
Is there anyone who will help you at all?

AMARNA: I am a slave. I am alone and I have no-one. Kill me and let it be over.

ADREA: Why do you want to die?

KERIDES: Do you have children who will mourn your death?

AMARNA: (A PAUSE)
No-one will mourn me.

KERIDES: You answered half of my question. Do you have children?

AMARNA: A slave does not have the right to be a mother. I was told that long ago.

KERIDES: You're avoiding my question. Have you ever had a child?

AMARNA: Why do you want to know?

KERIDES: I don't. Your daughter does.

AMARNA: What are you talking about? I don't know where my daughter is. I haven't seen her since...

ADREA: Since you were sold without her? Is that true?

AMARNA: How do you know that?

ADREA: We know everything about her.

KERIDES: Why did you murder Halke?

AMARNA: What?

ADREA: Why did you murder him?

KERIDES: He was stabbed in the heart. Did you do it?

AMARNA: What? Yes.

ADREA: You don't know?

AMARNA: Of course I know. What about my daughter?

KERIDES: Tell us the truth and we will tell you about your daughter.

ADREA: Was Halke an evil man?

KERIDES: Did he beat you?

ADREA: Or force himself on you?

KERIDES: A judge will understand if you were defending yourself.

ADREA: Did he deserve to die?

AMARNA: No! He deserved... tell me about my daughter! Please!

ADREA: Tell us what happened.

AMARNA: I want to know about my daughter!

KERIDES: I don't think she's going to tell us.

AMARNA: Please, tell me! Is my daughter alive? Is she well?

ADREA: (SIGHING)
Yes... mother. I'm fine.

AMARNA: What? This is a cruel trick.

ADREA: It's not a trick. I'm Adrea. I'm your daughter.

AMARNA: My daughter would be a slave.

ADREA: I was a slave. Until I met Kerides and he had my owner arrested for murder. Now I'm free and we're... well, we're...

KERIDES: We're going to be married. Soon.

ADREA: (A BIT SURPRISED)
Married. Oh. We haven't talked about that.

KERIDES: You don't want to?

ADREA: No. I mean, no I don't mean no. Oh I don't know what I mean. You surprised me.

That's all. And this wasn't where I expected to hear it.

AMARNA: I am happy for you... Adrea. At least they let you keep the name I gave you.

ADREA: Now we just need to keep you alive to be at my marriage.

AMARNA: That can't be. I am sorry, my daughter. It can't be.

ADREA: Just tell me. Did you murder Halke?

AMARNA: I can't tell you that.

ADREA: You don't have to. Kerides, she didn't do it. I don't know why she won't defend herself but she didn't kill him. I see it in her face. I know I'm right.

KERIDES: If you are, we have to find out soon. She faces trial and sentencing in the morning.

AMARNA: Please, Adrea. Let me go. You have love in your heart, I see that. Please, let me go.

ADREA: I won't do that. I can't.

FX: CELL CLOSES

AMARNA: Goodbye, my daughter.

SECOND COMMERCIAL

FX: FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: Kerides, you know I trust you.

KERIDES: Yes...

ADREA: And I promised not to get annoyed at you.

KERIDES: You're going to break that aren't you?

ADREA: I am if you don't tell me why we had to go and see Halke's body before coming to the scene of the crime. If there are clues they'll be here.

KERIDES: There are clues on the body, too, Adrea. And the body changes after death, stealing the evidence from sight.

ADREA: I didn't see any clues. All I saw was an old man with a hole in his chest where

someone stabbed him.

KERIDES: Yes, that was interesting, wasn't it?

ADREA: That's not the word I would have used. Kerides, please hurry. The trial will start soon - my mother doesn't stand a chance if we don't find something.

KERIDES: He died upstairs. We should try his bedchamber.

FX: FEET ON STEPS. DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

ADREA: Not here. The room hasn't been used in months.

FX: OTHER DOOR OPENS.

KERIDES: Neither has this one.

ADREA: Even if the rooms aren't used that's no excuse for the slaves not to keep them clean. Talking of slaves - where are they?

KERIDES: According to the guard captain, there aren't any. Your mother was the only slave Halke brought with him to Alexandria.

ADREA: She had to look after this place on her own? No wonder she killed him.

KERIDES: Hmm...

ADREA: Hmm? What does 'hmm' mean? Is that a good 'hmm' or a bad 'hmm'? And you can stop me talking nonsense by giving me an answer.

KERIDES: The bed.

ADREA: What about it? It's big, it's got blood on it.

KERIDES: And the pillows?

ADREA: Yes, It's got pillows. One on each side, like any... oh...

KERIDES: He wasn't sleeping alone.

ADREA: If he forced himself on her... he's lucky he's dead. I would have done worse.

KERIDES: For a wealthy man, Halke brought very little with him.

ADREA: Maybe he fell on hard times. It does happen.

KERIDES: Perhaps. Look at his clothes.

ADREA: Nice quality. But much too big for him. Maybe he couldn't afford a good tailor any more.

KERIDES: Or he stopped caring.

ADREA: Men are never any good with clothes. No matter what age they are.

KERIDES: Really?

ADREA: Well, except you, of course.
(BEAT)
And that's because I look after that for you.

KERIDES: What's this?

FX: SCRAPE OF A BEAKER LIFTED FROM A TABLE.

KERIDES: It's sweet. Poppy juice?

FX: ADREA SNIFFS.

ADREA: Definitely poppy juice.
(BEAT)
I don't use it - my owner did. It dulled the pain but he got really cranky after.

KERIDES: This is beginning to make sense.

ADREA: After using the poppy juice, he got angry, tried to force himself on my mother and she stabbed him in self defence. That doesn't sound good.

KERIDES: We should get to the court room.

FX: PEOPLE TALKING.

GUARD: All here present in the court of Pharaoh's justice shall be silent and Noble Judge Matala issues Pharaoh's wisdom and justice.

JUDGE: The court has listened to the noble and honest testimony of many members of the Palace Guard including the respected General Karnak, who sits here present among us. The defendant, the slave known as Amarna, has offered no defence against the accusations placed against her. The evidence is strong and there is no doubt in my mind that she is guilty. It is therefore Pharaoh's will that at a time chosen by Pharaoh, her head be cut from her body.

FX: DOORS BARGED OPEN. RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: Stop! Wait!

JUDGE: What is this? Guards, arrest those people.

KARNAK: He's one of my men, Judge.

JUDGE: I do not care. This is my court.

KARNAK: It's Pharaoh's court, and if one of my men burst in, he has a good reason. Thinker - you better have a good reason.

KERIDES: I think I do, General.

KARNAK: Then let's hear it.

KERIDES: I would like to ask Amarna a few questions.

JUDGE: This is an outrage.

KARNAK: Carry on, Thinker - but make it quick before the Judge sends us all to the dungeon.

KERIDES: Amarna, come and stand in front of the court.

AMARNA: Please, I ask you, if you know anything, let it go.

KERIDES: I'm sorry. I promised Adrea that I would find the truth. Please stand in front of the court or the guards will move you.

ADREA: Please?

AMARNA: As you wish.

FX: FOOTSTEPS.

KERIDES: Tell us about Halke, the man who was murdered. Your owner.

AMARNA: I do not know what I can tell you of him. His reputation tells you all that you need to know.

KERIDES: I don't think so. Would you say he was a good man? Remember, you are in court and only truth may be told here. Was Halke a good man?

AMARNA: Yes. He was a very good man.

KERIDES: Even though he used poppy juice, a potion known to addle men's minds.

AMARNA: Yes, despite that.

KERIDES: How long had he used poppy juice? Did it grip him as it captures many men?

AMARNA: No. He was not the poppy's captive. He used it... only recently. And as rarely as possible.

KERIDES: So he was a good man, who was not given to using the poppy... and yet you drove the dagger into his heart, didn't you?

ADREA: Kerides!

KERIDES: The truth, Amarna. You stabbed him in the heart with his own dagger – a military dagger. You did, didn't you?

ADREA: Kerides, stop.

KERIDES: I promised the truth, Adrea. Well, Amarna?

AMARNA: Yes. I drove the dagger into his heart.

FX: COURT STUNNED. SHOCK.

ADREA: Kerides? I will never forgive you for this. Never.

KERIDES: Yes, you will. So, Amarna, you murdered him?

AMARNA: Yes. I did.

KERIDES: Why? Why would you kill such a good man?

AMARNA: Every slave dreams of being free.

KERIDES: But you stayed with him as he died, ensuring that you would not escape. In fact, it was never your intention to escape, was it, Amarna?

AMARNA: I have confessed. What more do I need to say? Let me be judged.

KERIDES: It's true that you stabbed Halke with his own dagger. But you drove it into his heart after he was dead.

FX: MORE COURTROOM SHOCK.

KARNAK: All right, now I'm interested.

KERIDES: You are a brave and loyal woman, but it is time to stop this deception. If you won't tell the truth, I will. Halke travelled here with only you as companion. Why would he do that? He was wealthy. Only one room was used in his house, the rest were untended, and there was only one bed. You shared his bed all the time he was here.

FX: SHOCK.

KERIDES: His clothes are the vital part of the puzzle. They were much too large for him... at least when he died. But poppy juice is often taken to ease the pain of sickness, especially the sickness that eats people from within, shrinking them, causing them to lose weight. It can be a slow and painful death. And that broke your heart. He was not just your master, he was your lover, and he was dying. He returned to Egypt to die among his own people, and with the woman he loved. He would not have brought you otherwise. The sickness was killing him and he took poppy juice to ease the pain until it became too much for him.

AMARNA: (FINALLY BREAKING – SHE KNOWS SHE'S LOST)
Yes.

KERIDES: He deliberately took too much poppy juice, knowing it would kill him.

AMARNA: Yes. He was in so much pain. He was such a kind man. He did not deserve this suffering.

KERIDES: But you stabbed him to make it seem otherwise. Why? To save his honour, perhaps? The military dagger was too theatrical.

AMARNA: He was once a soldier. He did not want his comrades to think he was a coward for giving up his battle with sickness. But he could not bear it any longer.

KERIDES: And you would have given your own life to protect his honour.

AMARNA: I have nothing left to live for.

KERIDES: You have your daughter. She is worth living for.

AMARNA: I didn't know she was here. I didn't know. Be kind to her. Give her the life Halke gave me.

KERIDES: You loved him very much.

AMARNA: My heart was broken when I was sold without my little girl. They tore her from my arms. Halke bought me without even seeing me and we sailed for Carthage. I wept every day and took to hiding in the gardens to be alone with my misery. One day I found him there. His wife had died. That was why he left Alexandria. His heart was also broken. We talked, shared our suffering, and a friendship developed. It was no great step to find myself in his bed. The only surprise was how openly he showed affection for me. He treated me as his woman, not his slave. We shared a quiet life together for almost twenty years. I loved him very much and I know he loved me. When he died, I saw nothing worth living for.

KERIDES: I don't think that is your decision to make any more. General?

KARNAK: Judge, I'd say the Thinker has uncovered the truth – and an honourable woman.

JUDGE: I agree. The charge of murder no longer stands. The truth has been revealed in the Pharaoh's court. The brave Halke honourably took his own life and shall be remembered with respect.

FX: RUMBLE OF CONVERSATION.

ADREA: Kerides, you did it! You saved her.

KERIDES: Because you asked me to.

JUDGE: Have Amarna taken to a cell until the court decides her fate.

ADREA: What? But she's innocent. She's not charged with anything.

KERIDES: But she's still a slave. Halke never officially set her free.

ADREA: So what will happen to her?

KERIDES: I don't know.

FX: CREAK OF DOOR OPENING. FLICKERING TORCH.

ADREA: Hello? Mo... Amarna? I don't know what to call you.

AMARNA: I don't know either. It's a new experience for me, too.

ADREA: We'll work something out. Are you angry? That we saved your life?

AMARNA: I am angry that Halke's honour was put in danger. But no... I did not want to die and leave my daughter a second time.

ADREA: Good. Would you mind... I mean... would it bother you... look, I'm no good at this emotion stuff.

AMARNA: Your eyes say different when you look at that young man, Kerides. And so do his.

ADREA: Really? It's been a really complicated relationship.

AMARNA: You will be happy with him. And if he steps out of line...

ADREA: ...whip him back into shape.

FX: A LITTLE MOTHER-DAUGHTER LAUGH. BONDING.

AMARNA: You have no idea how often I have dreamed of seeing you.

ADREA: I think I might.

FX: DOOR OPENS.

ADREA: Kerides. Vizier Mentep.

MENTEP: Hello, my dear. And you must be Amarna.

ADREA: Am... Mother, this is Vizier Mentep.

AMARNA: The vizier? Pharaoh's vizier?

MENTEP: Oh, don't bow. Please. It hurts my neck if I have to look down. General Karnak sent for me – I think he's had a strange turn. He asked me to come and set your mother free, Adrea.

ADREA: That's wonderful. Isn't it, Mother?

AMARNA: No. Thank you, vizier, but no.

ADREA: Mother?

AMARNA: It is not the vizier's place to set me free. I was Halke's property. The choice was his, no-one else's.

ADREA: But...

AMARNA: My mind is set.

ADREA: Oh, that's absurd.

AMARNA: No more absurd than ignoring my wishes.

ADREA: Don't snap at me. We saved your life.

AMARNA: You interfered in my life!

MENTEP: Ladies, please.

KERIDES: Now there's two of them. Oh, dear.

MENTEP: I think I have a solution. My grandchildren visit me regularly and I need someone in my household to help tend them... Amarna, I will buy you from the court. That will be your job.

KERIDES: That's very kind, Vizier.

MENTEP: And it will ensure that Kerides and Adrea visit me regularly – hopefully with their own children in time. You may have missed your daughter growing up, Amarna, but you will see your grandchildren.

AMARNA: Thank you, Vizier.

ADREA: Vizier...

KERIDES: She's going to hug you.

FX: HUG.

MENTEP: Oh.

ADREA: Thank you!

MENTEP: So, Kerides... your mother-in-law is going to be living nearby. Aren't you lucky?

KERIDES: Oh.

THE MOTHER OF ALL CRIMES

Notes

This script was plotted very quickly over a lunchtime cup of coffee. Claire was very pregnant with her second baby and we were getting a lot of plotting done before she became too busy to work on scripts. Apparently babies need a lot of attention or something. Who knew? Does it show that I have no children?

I digress. After putting Kerides and Adrea into a relationship we wanted to explore her past a bit. All we really knew of her was that she had been a slave and she had developed a thick skin because of it. We'd dealt with the thick skin. Now we needed to delve into her past.

We had mentioned in the past that Adrea had never known her mother. That was a pretty potent idea to go back to. Now, just because Adrea had never met her mother that doesn't mean she wouldn't have done everything she could to find out about the woman who brought her into the world. So, she would have some knowledge of her mother.

But how would we introduce her mother?

It had to be a crime. After all, it *is* a mystery series. Obviously her mother had to be the suspect in a crime. The stakes needed to be high so we made it a murder case. As we discussed the case, what we actually found happening was that we were filling out the backstory for Adrea's mother, who we named Amarna. We'll return to that backstory later in the book. What we did find was that when Adrea and Amarna got together there was room for some good comedy and some real character development for Adrea. She and her mother are very alike. They're both stubborn and speak their minds... when they're together Adrea gets an idea of what it must be like to argue with herself. She gets more understanding of her relationship with Kerides from the relationship with her mother.

I have to say, Mary Anne Dorward's performance as Amarna was nailed on perfect from this first story. The regulars are always terrific, with Sarah and Ulric really getting a great grip on how their characters were evolving but I found Mary Anne's performance in the court scene when she talked about her life with Halke really very moving.

Bloody actors, they even get the writers to tear up. Curse them and their talent!

KERIDES THE THINKER
BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A CRIME?

by Claire Bartlett & Iain McLaughlin

first aired 9th December 2012

CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES: As ever, more of a man than he was. Still as smart as ever but more experienced

ADREA: 18 or 19. Pretty, feisty and, in her own way, more than a match for Kerides. She's intelligent, knows the city and is more relaxed with life than she was.

AMARNA: Female slave, early 40s. Adrea's mother, a slave who is now in Mentep's household.

ABILI: Male, early 20s, wealthy.

VARNA: Female, early 20s, married to Abili. She's wealthy and likes it that way. 2 children.

FX: BIRDS CHIRPING, A TRICKLE OF WATER.

ADREA: Mother, would you like something? More water? Wine?

AMARNA: Adrea, I am a slave. I have no right to behave in this manner.

ADREA: When I was a slave, we all behaved in this manner – we just made sure nobody
saw us.

AMARNA: Sitting in my master's garden we are very likely to be seen.

ADREA: Trust me, Vizier Mentep isn't going to care. He bought you so you would be close
to me.

AMARNA: Exactly - he bought me.

ADREA: And he pays you - how many slaves get paid?

AMARNA: You are stubborn, Adrea.

ADREA: I get it from my mother.

AMARNA: You are right - we are very alike.

ADREA: Which makes us both lucky.
(BEAT)
Mother, can I ask you something?

AMARNA: Would it stop you if I said no?

ADREA: Of course not.

AMARNA: Then go ahead.

ADREA: Who was my father? Will you tell me about him? What was he like?

AMARNA: Ever since we met, I've been waiting for this question.

ADREA: Does that mean you've used the time to come up with a really good answer?

AMARNA: Sadly, no. I have no answer for you.

ADREA: You do know who he was?

AMARNA: Of course I do - I'm a slave not a harlot.

ADREA: I know, I know. But sometimes I hear about slaves not having much choice in that kind of thing.

AMARNA: It was not like that, I promise you this.

ADREA: Did you love him?

AMARNA: Adrea, I will not tell you more on this matter.

ADREA: I have a right to know about my family.

AMARNA: And I have a right to protect my privacy.

ADREA: A few minutes ago you said slaves had no rights.

AMARNA: A few minutes ago you pointed out that I am no ordinary slave.

ADREA: You're right - we really are alike. You have to understand why I'm so interested in finding out about my family. I don't even know if I have any brothers or sisters.

AMARNA: Adrea, you are my only child. I promise you this is true.

ADREA: I believe you.

(BEAT)

But you know I'm going to ask Kerides to find out my father, right?

AMARNA: Yes, and I know that when you say 'ask' what you mean is that you will be demanding.

ADREA: Well, his investigating might as well come in useful for a change. Oh, I said I wasn't going to be mean to him, didn't I? Well, if I can't talk to my mother about him, who can I talk to? But it stays between you and me, okay?

FX: PAPERS BEING SHUFFLED.

ADREA: Kerides? Are you listening?

KERIDES: If I say no, will you throw that pot at me?

ADREA: No. But you might wind up wearing what's in it.

KERIDES: Then I'm listening.

ADREA: Well, what do you think?

KERIDES: That I'd rather eat your cooking than wear it.

ADREA: That's not what I'm talking about and you know it. So, will you do it? Will you snoop around?

KERIDES: I'm really not comfortable investigating something private in your mother's past when she doesn't want us to look into.

ADREA: And I'm not comfortable that she won't tell me about my father.

KERIDES: Have you considered that your mother might be keeping quiet to protect you? It's possible your father wasn't a nice man, Adrea. What if he was a cruel slave or a murderer? He could have been any kind of a man.

ADREA: And he could have been a good man. And he could still be alive. It's not just about who he is - it's who I am. I have a right to know. Please?

KERIDES: All right. I'll see what I can find out.

ADREA: We'll see what we can find out.
(BEAT)
Kerides, are you only doing this to get a quiet life?

KERIDES: Adrea, I don't think I'm ever going to have a quiet life with you.

ADREA: Are you saying I talk a lot? Well, I guess I do. It's a bad habit. But there are worse.

KERIDES: I'm doing it because you asked me to.

ADREA: Oh, that's a really good answer.

FX: STREET SOUNDS. BUSTLING.

ADREA: I didn't know it would be so easy to find out who sold my mother and me.

KERIDES: All sales of slaves are recorded in the Palace's Hall of Records.

ADREA: Didn't you think it was sad that they only recorded the numbers of slaves, not their names?

KERIDES: I suppose there are just too many slaves to have their names recorded. And their names are often changed by their new masters. We were lucky that so few places... well, obviously not lucky...

ADREA: Lucky that so few people would be heartless enough to take a baby from her mother and sell them to different families? You've got a funny idea of luck.

KERIDES: I just meant... oh, you know what I meant.

ADREA: Yes. I'm just keeping you on your toes. I don't want you thinking I'm going soft on you.

KERIDES: Trust me, Adrea, I'm never likely to think that.

ADREA: I knew you were smart. Unless you forgot to get the address of whoever sold me.

KERIDES: I have it here. And it isn't a long walk. It's the largest house on the avenue of cedars.

ADREA: I know that place. I used to meet one of their slaves at the market. They sold me? I'm glad I didn't have to live there - apparently the mistress of the house was a miserable shrew. Walked around like she had a bad smell under her nose. Of course, this city has the biggest fishing fleet in the world. When the wind's in the wrong direction we all have a bad smell under our noses. I'm rambling, aren't I?

KERIDES: Just a little.

FX: BRISK WALKING.

ADREA: Sorry. Anyway, if we cut through this alley we should get to the avenue of cedars much quicker. Just be careful. If you knock over any of the merchants' property we'll have to pay for it. And I'm going to be taking much more care of your money now we're going to be married.

KERIDES: Are you careless with it now?

ADREA: You'll have to try harder than that to get me to say something stupid. You know, I have no idea why the city lets the merchants block a perfectly good alley by using it as a store. When I was a...

FX: WOODEN BARRELS RUB AGAINST EACH OTHER.

KERIDES: Adrea, look out!

ADREA: What?

FX: WOODEN BARRELS TUMBLE.

KERIDES: (URGENTLY)
I've got you. In the doorway, quick.

FX: THE BARREL TUMBLE BECOMES BIGGER - LOTS OF BARRELS. AN
AVALANCHE OF THEM.

KERIDES: Get flat to the doorway.

FX: THE RUMBLE OF BARRELS DIES AWAY.

KERIDES: Adrea. Are you hurt? Are you all right?

ADREA: I'm fine. But the merchant who stacked those barrels won't be once I find him.

KERIDES: It wasn't the merchant. I'm sure I saw someone pushing at the barrels.

ADREA: Are you saying someone did that on purpose?

KERIDES: Yes... I think someone tried to kill us.

FIRST COMMERCIAL

ADREA: What do you mean someone just tried to kill us? Why would anyone want to kill us? All right, forget I said that. You've been making enemies since you arrived in Alexandria.

KERIDES: To be fair, most of them have been criminals.

ADREA: Don't try to wriggle out of this.

KERIDES: I think I should go to the Palace and see if any of the guards have heard about someone threatening me.

ADREA: Don't you dare. If you don't go and talk to the people who sold me the whole city will hear someone threaten you - and it'll be me!

KERIDES: Adrea, you did promise not to be so... forceful.

ADREA: Oh, there's nobody around to hear. Besides - this matters, Kerides. It really matters to me.

KERIDES: All right. But no more short cuts through alleys. They're too dangerous.

FX: MUSICAL BRIDGE.

FOOTSTEPS ON STONE, A TRICKLE OF WATER.

ADREA: (IMPRESSED)
I was born here?

KERIDES: It is a nice house.

ADREA: Nice house? I give up. You may be the smartest man in Alexandria but when it comes to houses, just accept that I know more. They even have a little fountain inside the house.

KERIDES: You see those at the palace all the time.

ADREA: I wasn't born at the palace. Kerides, this is probably the most beautiful house I've ever seen.

VARNA: Thank you.

KERIDES: I'm sorry. We didn't hear you come in.

VARNA: The house is always quiet at this time of day. My sons sleep through the hottest part of the day.

ADREA: You have children?

VARNA: Two boys one born in each of the last two summers. Now, may I be rude and enquire about your business here. My husband is not present at the moment.

ADREA: We'd just like some information.

VARNA: About what?

ADREA: Your slaves. Well, two slaves - they were sold almost twenty years ago.

VARNA: (DISMISSIVE)
Oh, I can't help you. I know nothing of the slaves. I leave dealing with them to my husband. Or perhaps this is more appropriate for one of the servants to deal with.

KERIDES: Perhaps, but I would like to talk with any member of your family who was present in this house at that time.

VARNA: Would you? And who are you to make these demands? This family holds a high position in society. We are not accustomed to people making demands upon us.

ADREA: And Kerides works for General Karnak - and we're pretty friendly with Vizier Mentep.

KERIDES: Friendly is true, but it feels showy to just drop his name in like that.

ADREA: I know. That's why I did it. I'd say Mentep is a mentor to Kerides. Mentor Mentep, you could say.

KERIDES: I think he would like that.

ADREA: So you may not be used to people making demands on you but Kerides isn't used to people ignoring his questions.

VARNA: And who are you?

KERIDES: Adrea is with me... I'm sorry. I don't know your name.

VARNA: Varna. My husband, Abili, is master of this house. But as I explained earlier, he is not here at the moment.

KERIDES: I believe there's an older woman who lives here. A stern lady?

VARNA: Shinna. She was my husband's mother. She was... a strong-willed woman from a powerful old family.

ADREA: The way you're saying 'was', I take it she's...

VARNA: She passed from this life just after my first son was born. I believe she forced herself to stay alive so that she could see him.

ADREA: From what I hear the afterlife probably didn't want her.

VARNA: What is that supposed to mean?

KERIDES: She means that your husband's mother sounds like a formidable woman.

ABILI: She was.

VARNA: Abili, you're home. These people are from the Palace. They have some questions.

ABILI: About my mother?

KERIDES: About two slaves your family sold some time ago.

ABILI: I don't know anything about slaves. I have no interest in them. Nor did my mother.

KERIDES: Yet your parents decided to sell two slaves from your household - just two out of over a hundred. Those slaves were a woman and her young child. They were torn apart and sold to different masters.

VARNA: A woman had her child sold?

ABILI: They were just slaves, Varna.

KERIDES: But why would your parents choose to do this?

ABILI: I have no knowledge of something that happened when I was an infant and I have never understood any of the decisions my father made. If you wish to find answers on this I suggest that you track down the slaves and find what they know.

KERIDES: I already have.

ABILI: You know where they are?

KERIDES: I do.

ADREA: But in all honesty, I wasn't the hardest person for him to find, what with us living together and everything.

ABILI: You? Are a slave?

VARNA: And you talk to us like equals.

ADREA: Oh, who do you think keeps these big houses running? Certainly not the rich. You probably don't even know how to make bread or where the cleaning tools are kept.

VARNA: Of course not. We own slaves for that.

KERIDES: And Adrea isn't a slave, not any more. She's free.

ADREA: And it's not all it's cracked up to be.

ABILI: You should leave now, both of you. I have no knowledge or interest in chattel my family dispatched with years ago.

KERIDES: We're only asking why your parents would do something as cruel as tear a child from her mother and sell them to different houses, one of which was far distant in Carthage.

ABILI: My mother did not make decisions with her heart, and as for my father... I never

understood any of his decisions.

KERIDES: Do you mean business decisions or the more personal kind?

ABILI: Listen to me. My father was a weak man. He was a good man at heart but he was a drunkard who all but ruined this house and drank himself to death. I have spent the years since his death repairing our reputation and our businesses. If he sold you away from your mother... I assume he was simply offered a good price and took it. You would have been little more than a few drinks at the tavern to him. I don't mean that to sound cruel - it's just the way he was. Weak. And I trust none of this will leave these walls.

KERIDES: Of course not.

ADREA: Kerides?

KERIDES: We're not going to learn anything here, Adrea. If the people who know the facts are dead, no-one can learn anything.

ADREA: Since when did something as trivial as death stop you?

KERIDES: Sometimes, Adrea, time just takes away the answers.

ADREA: So that's it?

KERIDES: I'm sorry.

ADREA: I thought... I just thought you would find out who my father was.

KERIDES: Really, I'm sorry, Adrea.

ADREA: (UTTERLY DEFLATED)
It's not your fault. We should go.

KERIDES: Thank you both for your time.

FX: BABY CRIES.

VARNA: They have wakened early.

ADREA: You should go to them. A mother's place is with her children. Come on, Kerides.

FX: HURRYING FOOTSTEPS.

KERIDES: Thank you again, Abili.

FX: FOOTSTEPS RUNNING FAST AFTER ADREA.

KERIDES: Adrea, wait.

FX: STREET SOUNDS. HURRYING FOOTSTEPS.

KERIDES: Adrea, slow down.

ADREA: No. No I won't slow down. This is how fast I need to be walking.

KERIDES: It looks more like running.

ADREA: Don't play word games, Kerides. Look, I don't blame you for not being able to find out what happened - though I will never let you forget it - but I just need to be home now. Do you understand?

KERIDES: I do understand. But we're not going home.

ADREA: Why not? I need...

KERIDES: (CUTTING ACROSS HER)
You need to know the truth. And We're more likely to find that back at the Hall of Records than at home.

ADREA: Kerides, do you know what happened?

KERIDES: I don't know anything. Not yet. But after the Hall of Records, I might.

ADREA: Then stop dawdling. We need to get back to the Hall of Records.

FX: HURRYING FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: And Kerides...

KERIDES: Yes?

ADREA: Thank you for not giving up. Now, come on!

FX: RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

FX: QUIET OTHER THAN A FLICKERING TORCH AND THE MOVING OF PAPYRUS.

KERIDES: This is interesting...

ADREA: That's the first time I've heard tax records called interesting. Do we pay tax, by the way? I never had to think of that when I was a slave.

KERIDES: These are interesting because they show me how much tax Elian - that's Abili's father - paid during his life, and how much the family has paid since.

ADREA: How rich are they? Are they obscenely wealthy?

KERIDES: Look for yourself.

FX: SCUFF OF SCROLL MOVING.

ADREA: I'm not great at reading yet but does that say how much I think it says?

KERIDES: I think so.

ADREA: Okay, they're obscenely wealthy.

KERIDES: But they weren't always doing so well. Let's go back...

FX: SCROLL SCUFFING.

KERIDES: Here. 25 years ago.

ADREA: He was doing okay. Not great but okay.

KERIDES: The same next year but look the year after that.

ADREA: That's a lot of money! Where did that come from?

KERIDES: I think if we check the records... there - now he's married.

ADREA: Back at the house Varna said he married into an old family.

KERIDES: A rich, old family. Their income rises for the next four years but it begins to fall away... here.

ADREA: That's around the time my mother and I were sold.

KERIDES: It drops away after that. Slowly at first, then quicker as the years pass. If he hadn't died, they might have wound up destitute. Abili is certainly more astute in business than his father. He has them back where they were 20 years ago.

ADREA: That tells us a lot, right?

KERIDES: Yes.

ADREA: But you know that I haven't a clue what it tells us, so you're going to tell me everything.

KERIDES: Absolutely. Right after we let it be known that your mother has decided to tell us who your father is.

ADREA: Why would we do that? Kerides? Kerides?

SECOND COMMERCIAL

FX: NIGHT. A FEW BURNING TORCHES.

ADREA: Kerides? Do you know how annoying it is when you ignore my questions?

KERIDES: Oh, yes. You tell me regularly.

ADREA: So why won't you tell me why we announced that my mother has decided to tell us who my father is? When we both know she's not going to do that?

KERIDES: I just didn't want to worry you.

ADREA: I wasn't worried about anything - until you said you didn't want to worry me - and now I'm really worried. Especially since you made us wait till the middle of the night go home.

KERIDES: It might be nothing. I'm just being...

FX: OMINOUS FOOTSTEPS CLOSE. TWO SWORDS DRAWN.

ADREA: Oh. Do you think they're looking for us?

KERIDES: I think so.

ADREA: We don't have any money with us. In fact we don't have any money at all. Maybe if you leave your address we can send you some? Am I babbling?

KERIDES: Definitely. If you two put your swords down you won't be hurt.

ADREA: Kerides? Stop antagonising them. I want to be a wife before I'm a widow.

KERIDES: The Palace Guard are moving into position behind you. Look if you don't believe

me.

ADREA: They're never going to fall for that old trick.

FX: SWORDS DRAWN - A LOT OF THEM. HEAVY FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: Oh. The Palace Guard really are there.

FX: A SCUFFLE.

KERIDES: Take those two to General Karnak. He's waiting to interrogate them. And he's quite looking forward to it.

ADREA: You knew we were going to be attacked? That's what you didn't want to worry me about.

KERIDES: Well, I thought we might be ambushed...

ADREA: You know I promised not to talk to you so meanly in future? Did I say anything about not hitting you?

KERIDES: No, but I really hope you won't.

ADREA: We'll see. Do we still have Palace Guards watching us?

KERIDES: Yes.

ADREA: It's getting cold. Put your arm and your cloak around my shoulder - give them something to talk about in the barracks.

FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN. LOW CRACKLE OF DYING FIRE. EARLY MORNING BIRDS.

ADREA: Home at last. Did we have to tell General Karnak what happened so many times? You think he'll get those assassins to talk?

KERIDES: He's very gifted at persuading people to tell the truth. You don't want to know how.

ADREA: You're right. I probably don't.

KERIDES: They're probably singing like Pharaoh's pet larks now.

ADREA: So once they tell Karnak who hired them, we can get back to finding out about my father. And why does your face say that's not going to happen? It's never simple with you,

is it?

KERIDES: Would you want it to be?

ADREA: Of course not. Where's the fun in that? But I'd like to know why we can't go back to finding out about my father.

KERIDES: Because the attempts on our lives today... I think we were both the target of the barrels but tonight, I think the target was you.

ADREA: Me? What did I ever do to anyone? Don't answer that.

KERIDES: It's not what you did - it's about your father.

FX: A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

ADREA: This isn't happening. Who comes calling this early? Even the rooster is still half asleep. I'll answer it. I know, as the lady of the house it's not really my place - we should hire someone. But we can't afford it.

FX: DOOR OPENS.

ADREA: Varna?

VARNA: (UNCOMFORTABLE)
I know it's early... may I enter?

ADREA: Yes. Come in. Sit.

VARNA: I wasn't sure if you would be awake so early.

KERIDES: We were up all night.

ADREA: It wasn't even a good party.

KERIDES: If you don't mind me asking, what brings you here?

VARNA: Abili... we talked last night. We feel... well, there is a responsibility for the situation you and your mother were placed in. We were not there but it was our house which did this to you. However, there is... there is responsibility from our house for what happened.

ADREA: There's not a lot you can do about it now. My days of being a slave are over.

VARNA: I know that. There is an Egyptian tradition. When two houses have bad feeling between them, they mend this broken bridge by each making an offering to the other. So, in

good faith, in this basket I bring you the best of food and wine in the hope we can have peace between our houses.

KERIDES: Thank you, Varna. I know this can't have been easy for you.

VARNA: No, but it had to be done. We are an old house, you have much favour in court at the moment. It would do neither of us good for there to be ill-feeling between us. Now I should leave you. If you respond in kind... the actual content of any offering is not important. I see you are not wealthy. The gesture is what matters.

FX: DOOR CLOSSES.

ADREA: Not wealthy? Is she saying there's something wrong with our house? I hope she's not saying it's dirty. I clean it every day. Well, almost every day.

KERIDES: That's not what she meant. What's in the basket?

FX: BASKET OPENED.

ADREA: She wasn't joking. This really is the best quality.

KERIDES: It couldn't be anything else from an old family like that. Anything less would cause them to lose face.

ADREA: Who cares about losing face? We haven't eaten for almost a day. I'm starving.

KERIDES: Wait. I'm going to return the basket to Varna and Abili.

ADREA: Kerides, it's sweet of you, but is this really worth starting some feud over?

KERIDES: I'm going to return it, and have General Karnak make Varna, Abili and both of their sons test the food.

ADREA: You're not serious. You don't really think the food Varna gave us was poisoned.

KERIDES: I do. Smell it. Can you smell almonds?

ADREA: Yes - and I like almonds.
(BEAT)
It's not almonds, is it?

KERIDES: No. Abili knows what it is, don't you, Abili?
(NO ANSWER)

I know you're here - you sneaked in through a window when Adrea opened the door to your wife. Your timing was a little off. I saw a hanging move in the breeze before Adrea opened

the door. There are palace guards watching the house. Do I have to call for them?

FX: DRAPE MOVED.

ABILI: No. There is no need for that.

KERIDES: The question is, whether you were here to stop your wife from poisoning us, or to act as her accomplice.

ADREA: I'm being a terrible hostess. Would you like some food or wine? We have a lovely hamper here. Try some.

KERIDES: I don't think he will.

ADREA: Why? Why did you try to kill us? Because your parents broke up a family twenty years ago? That's not worth murdering someone. Especially me.

KERIDES: Are you going to tell her Abili? Or would you prefer I did it?

ABILI: I have nothing to say to either of you.

KERIDES: Very well. Adrea, I am so sorry. I think this is going to hurt you but it's the truth.

ADREA: Tell me anyway.

KERIDES: Abili's father, Ellian, was an average trader at best. He made a decent living but nothing more than that. Until he married Abili's mother. A harsh woman from an old, wealthy family. I assume this coldness came from being disregarded at home. She certainly wasn't their first child. Otherwise they would never have let her marry such an average fellow. But she saw something in him - or in his business, because she was all business, wasn't she? Ellian would have enjoyed the first few years of the marriage - there was a lot of money, but he had a cold wife. With a son already born, perhaps she had no more need of Ellian in her bed. He had fulfilled his use.

ADREA: So he started drinking and sold us?

KERIDES: That's what Abili would like us to believe, isn't it? But it's not quite true. Ellian was a weak man, that's true. But the drinking didn't start until after you were sold. You and your mother. The tax records tell us that. Why is that? Perhaps because he took solace in the arms of a slave. Your mother. And he found the warmth and affection denied him by his wife. Your mother - Amarna - became pregnant and you were born. Somehow it became known that Ellian was your father and in an act of revenge - probably more for the insult of sleeping with a slave than for the infidelity itself - Abili's mother, Shinna, had you sold to different houses separated by a sea.

ADREA: And he did nothing to stop her? My father just let it happen?

KERIDES: He was a weak man. Too weak to protect his daughter and the woman he had taken to his bed. Instead, he turned to wine and drank himself to death. Perhaps he was deliberately trying to ruin his family in revenge. I don't know.

ADREA: Wait. So Abili is...

KERIDES: Your brother. Half brother to be accurate. You have the same father but different mothers.

ADREA: And you tried to kill me? Why? Haven't your family done enough?

KERIDES: Still nothing to say, Abili?

ABILI: Nothing - and this is nothing but a story. You have no proof. Her mother's silence kills your accusations.

KERIDES: You're right. I have no proof of who Adrea's father was.

ABILI: Then I will leave. You should hope I never see either of you again.

KERIDES: I said I had no proof of who Adrea's father was. But by now we will have proof of the attempts on our lives. General Karnak will have broken your assassins. Even if you used someone else to hire them, General Karnak is very thorough. It will lead back to you. As will an investigation in the Hall of Records. Your family were so concerned about the possibility of scandal when it became known that Amarna had come back to Alexandria that you paid someone in the Hall of Records to keep watch in case anyone investigated your family. And then there is this food... poisoned and brought by your wife. Was she involved in your plan?

ADREA: Was she?

KERIDES: Your assassins will be put to death. Their blood is on your hands and you are going to pay for it with your life. Your money and your powerful friends can't stop that. The only question is whether your wife will die with you.

ADREA: Answer him. Answer me, damn you.

ABILI: Varna knew nothing. She thought she was making peace.

KERIDES: You were only here to take away the incriminating food.

ADREA: Why do you hate me so much?

ABILI: You and your mother almost destroyed my family.

ADREA: Your mother didn't love Ellian.

ABILI: I'm not talking about love. Our position in society. If it became known that he had taken a slave to his bed – and produced a child... we would have been a laughing stock. Instead he almost destroyed us with drink. I laughed when he died, I put nothing of worth in his tomb for the next life. Let him live a peasant's life there.

KERIDES: But you didn't protect your family. Everything you have will be taken by the palace.

ABILI: No!

KERIDES: Your wife and children will be on the street. You've destroyed your family. As Ellian's only child, the house will probably fall to Adrea. I'm sure you will see the irony in that.

ADREA: Kerides, stop. Stop it.

KERIDES: Adrea?

ADREA: Abili, you're going to die. We can't stop that. It's already in General Karnak's hands. But we can give you time to make things right for your family.

ABILI: What do you mean?

ADREA: Kerides, how long will it be before General Karnak sends his men for Abili?

KERIDES: A few hours. Noon at the latest.

ADREA: That's how long you have. That's all I can give you.

ABILI: Why? Why give me this time?

ADREA: If you try to run, Karnak will hunt you down. Now get out of my house.

ABILI: Yes.

KERIDES: And one thing before you go.

FX: A HARD PUNCH.

KERIDES: Adrea will be my wife. Nobody hurts her.

FX: RUNNING FOOTSTEPS EXITING. DOOR CLOSES.

ADREA: Kerides. Would you just hug me , please?

KERIDES: It'll be all right, Adrea. I promise.

FX: HEAVY FOOTSTEPS. A WOMAN'S WEEPING - VARNA.

KERIDES: General Karnak found Abili's body on a couch on the roof. He'd taken the same poison he tried to use on us.

ADREA: Now what?

KERIDES: I persuaded the General there's no point in investigating a crime when the criminal is dead.

ADREA: He was my brother and he tried to kill me. Just for being born a slave.

KERIDES: I know. But you did a noble thing. You gave him the chance to save his family. This house could have been yours.

ADREA: I don't want it. I have enough trouble cleaning ours. Besides, I don't need to see another family destroyed because of this mess. Varna tried to make peace and he used her.

KERIDES: She thinks his heart failed. The General will let her think that.

ADREA: Good. Look at her, Kerides. She's alone. Nobody has come to comfort her. Maybe I'm lucky to have the family I've already got. You, my mother - even if she is the most stubborn woman in Alexandria.

KERIDES: Second most stubborn.

ADREA: Mentep feels like family now. Even General Karnak... we should go to her, Kerides.

KERIDES: I don't know anything about this kind of thing.

ADREA: Neither do I. But I brought a peace offering basket. It's time for that. And I didn't miss that 'second most stubborn woman' line. We'll talk about that later.

KERIDES: I'm sure we will.

ADREA: Come on...

BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE A CRIME?

Notes

Those of you who were paying attention will have noticed a change in the way Claire and I are credited on this story. Normally, in an unchivalrous manner, my name goes first and then Claire's. It was something we decided on at the start of us working together. From here, it changed. At least with Kerides. We had worked out the previous story 'The Mother of All Crimes' in our lunchbreak on Claire's last day before going off on maternity leave. We had two scripts worked out that would be really good for Adrea. They were also good stories for Kerides but they were really Adrea's journey. We were feeling really pleased with ourselves that we had two plots to work into scripts and we had five minutes to get back to the office (we worked in the same office, on the same publication at that time) and then Claire started asking some questions.

What about Adrea's father?

Who was he?

Why is he not mentioned?

What's his story with Amarna?

Does Adrea have any other family?

I sat with a pen and a pad, and I furiously jotted notes as Claire outlined the story that became 'Brother Can You Spare A Crime' straight off the top of her head in roughly three minutes flat. And I'm serious about that timescale. It was like watching a jazz musician working on a tune. Ideas came and went very quickly but she managed to outline that story, the character of Adrea's father, his place in society, what his family was like, how Adrea and her mother were separated, the brother who hated her... I kid you not, Claire did that in three minutes. I chipped in occasional suggestions and as usual I wrote the first draft but this story was Claire's. *Three minutes.*

Typing the first draft of the script took me longer than three minutes.

As it goes, I think it rounds out a little trilogy of stories developing Adrea, Kerides and their relationship really well. It's definitely one of my favourite Kerides stories that we've done.

I must admit, the title is a) a shocking pun and b) not even my shocking pun. I used to watch a comedy show called *Sledge Hammer*. Turns out they had an episode called 'Brother Can You Spare A Crime?'. Patrick Wayne turned up as the hero's rotten brother. It wasn't intentional but I can only assume that title stuck in some dark recess of my brain and popped out when I needed something to call this story. So, I apologise for pinching the title, but in my defence... I really loved *Sledge Hammer*.

Oh, and did anyone spot the *Morecambe & Wise* gag in that script?

KERIDES THE THINKER

SHOPPING CAN BE MURDER

by Claire Bartlett & Iain McLaughlin

first aired 24th March 2013

CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES:

ADREA:

MENTEP:

KARNAK:

ANDROS: Local butcher, bit of a chancer.

FX: WALKING THROUGH ALEXANDRIA. BUSY. A BAZAAR.

ADREA: Isn't this nice, Kerides?

KERIDES: The market? I suppose so.

ADREA: You suppose so?

KERIDES: Well, it's just a market. It's a very good market but still. It's just a market.

ADREA: For a smart man you really miss some obvious things.

KERIDES: I do? Like what?

ADREA: A market isn't just a market - ever.

KERIDES: It's not?

ADREA: No. It's... it's excitement.

KERIDES: Excitement? A market?

ADREA: Look over there. The perfume stall.

KERIDES: What about it?

ADREA: What do you see?

KERIDES: A woman buying perfume.

ADREA: I thought you saw everything. Look closer. They're arguing over the price. He's charging too much, she's offering half of what's worth.

KERIDES: You can tell that from here?

ADREA: I can tell that because it's what we all do. They always ask for double, we always offer half. Somewhere in the middle, everybody's happy.

KERIDES: I see.

ADREA: Look over there.

KERIDES: A fish stall?

ADREA: But what kind of fish? Where were they caught? What adventures did the

fishermen have catching them? And at the far side of the market, expensive jewellery and pieces of art. The man who's going there. What's his story? Is he a wealthy man buying something for his wife? Or maybe his lover? Or has he had to scrimp and save to buy something special?

KERIDES: From his clothes, I'd say he was wealthy but from the way he's sneaking to the stall, I'd say it's for his lover - and he doesn't want his wife to know.

ADREA: Don't take the fun out of this.

KERIDES: You asked.

ADREA: You haven't got a romantic bone in your body, have you?

KERIDES: That's not what you said last night.

ADREA: Kerides! What if somebody hears you?

KERIDES: Sorry.

ADREA: No you're not. And neither am I. But no smooching in the market place.

KERIDES: If you say so.

ADREA: A market's full of stories. And you know what's best?

KERIDES: The perfume?

ADREA: No - that none of the stories are about murder. Although that perfume really is nice. Not that we can afford it.

KERIDES: So how do you know how it smells?

ADREA: By testing it. Don't you ever test things?

KERIDES: No.

ADREA: Maybe you're not as smart as I tell people you are. It works like this. I go to the perfume stall. I look at a few perfumes, pretend that I don't like any of them, that I'm not going to buy anything - that way they always let you try some of the really good stuff.

KERIDES: Which you don't buy.

ADREA: No, but I get a free sample and I smell good all day.

KERIDES: Do you do the same with butchers? Because this isn't the usual butcher stall you use.

ADREA: Try to scam men who chop up meat for a living? Not a chance.

KERIDES: So why are we at the most expensive butcher's stall in the market?

ANDROS: Hey, don't say that. You'll scare my customers away. I'm not expensive - I offer prestigious quality cuts of the finest meats.

ADREA: For stupidly high prices.

ANDROS: Will you stop saying things like that? Business is tough enough already.

KERIDES: If he's so expensive why are we here instead of our usual butcher?

ANDROS: Will you stop saying I'm expensive? I'll have you thrown out of the market.

ADREA: Did I mention that we might have guests joining us to eat tonight?

KERIDES: No...

ADREA: Yesterday at the palace, I asked Mentep and General Karnak to join us.

ANDROS: Mentep? Vizier Mentep? You know the vizier?

ADREA: Yes. And do you mind? This is a private conversation.

ANDROS: Please enjoy the finest meats, all fresh today.
(LOUDLY)

All fit for your guest, the great Vizier Mentep.

FX: RUMBLES OF CROWD INTEREST.

ADREA: Thanks a lot. Now everybody will think we have plenty of money and charge me double.

ANDROS: Business is business. So what would you like to feed your guest...
(LOUDLY)

...your dear friend the Vizier. Andros the butcher feeds the best people in Alexandria.

ADREA: I'll feed you a punch in the mouth if you don't quiet down.

KERIDES: Adrea...

ADREA: Oh, all right. I won't punch him.

KERIDES: Good.

ADREA: ou will. What's the point in having a husband and doing the manual work myself?

KERIDES: We're not married yet. And didn't we come here for food rather than a fight?

ADREA: Oh. Right. Who distracted me?

KERIDES: He did.

ANDROS: Me?

ADREA: Yes, you. Now what do you have? I want something worthy of the Vizier and if you repeat that to the crowd or anyone you're in big trouble. Got it?

ANDROS: Got it.

KERIDES: Smart move.

ADREA: So, what do you have?

ANDROS: Goat, freshly slaughtered this morning.

ADREA: Goat, for a vizier? I don't think so.

ANDROS: Camel?

ADREA: I want him to still like me after the meal. What's that on the side?

ANDROS: You don't want that.

ADREA: I don't?

ANDROS: Worse than camel. I keep pigs for those who like that. And beautiful fresh sheep. So fresh the meat will walk to your house.

ADREA: Is that a butcher joke?

ANDROS: Yes.

ADREA: I bet the other butchers laugh.

ANDROS: My animals are so fresh I had to round a few of them up this morning.

ADREA: I'm sure you did. I was talking about other butchers... are there any?

KERIDES: There's one over here. Not far at all. It looks empty.

ANDROS: He didn't show up today. He's very unreliable. You can't trust his meat. You don't know what it is.

ADREA: We'll have a look anyway.

ANDROS: But he doesn't have anything on show. He's not there.

ADREA: Maybe he's less expensive than you.

ANDROS: Because you are the Vizier's friend, I give you everything at half price - and I will have it delivered.

ADREA: Well, since this one didn't show up and he has nothing on show...

KERIDES: But something's attracting the flies.

ADREA: Don't look at me.

KERIDES: I like looking at you. You're beautiful.

ADREA: That's not fair - you can't be nice to me when I'm being grouchy. But thank you.

KERIDES: Oh.

ADREA: Oh? Oh, no.

ANDROS: What?

ADREA: I recognise that "Oh!" - and it always means trouble. What is it?

KERIDES: I think I may have found the other butcher.

ANDROS: Asleep during the day? Probably drunk last night. He's a botcher not a butcher. Look, I'll give you the meat you want for free - if I can say Vizier's friends buy from me.

ADREA: Kerides... the butcher you found isn't drunk, is he?

ANDROS: He never had the stomach for good drink.

KERIDES: He doesn't have a stomach at all. Or a body. There's only his head.

ADREA: Ewww.

FIRST COMMERCIAL

FX: IN KERIDES AND ADREA'S HOUSE.

MENTEP: And you really lifted the butcher's head to show Adrea?

KERIDES: Well... yes.

ADREA: It's just as well I already agreed to marry you or that might have put me off.
Remember, sandals and jewelry - good. Severed heads - bad.

KERIDES: I'll remember.

ADREA: (GOOD HUMORED, QUITE GENTLE – THE BICKERING HAS SHIFTED
INTO TEASING BY THIS POINT OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP)
No you won't. But I'll remind you.

KERIDES: I don't doubt it.

ADREA: It was horrible. Filthy, covered in muck. Ugh.

MENTEP: Do you know about this case, General Karnak?

KARNAK: Do we have to talk business?

MENTEP: What else would we talk about? We can't talk about our wives.

KARNAK: That's true - we'll have to be careful what we say about our wives in front of
Adrea now she's going to join their club.

ADREA: Are you teasing me?

MENTEP: Us? As if we would. But you didn't answer my question, Karnak. What do you
know of the case?

KARNAK: Only what I heard reported at the palace. The butcher who was found... what was
his name?

KERIDES: Milios.

KARNAK: That's the one. Milios. His head was found in his back area of his shop.

MENTEP: Just his head?

KARNAK: That's what I hear.

MENTEP: What had happened to him?

KARNAK: Kerides could answer that better than me but I heard it was like he'd been savaged by an wild animal.

KERIDES: It's true. There were gouges in his skin and flesh had been ripped off...

ADREA: If you'll excuse me, I think I'll go and see to the food. That's if anyone can eat after this conversation.

MENTEP: It's not the most pleasant case, is it?

KERIDES: It's not.

KARNAK: So what kind of animal could have done it?

KERIDES: It's hard to say. I looked around the area and there weren't any paw prints.

KARNAK: That's hardly surprising. There were thousands of people in that market during the day. Any paw prints would have been walked away.

KERIDES: Were there any reported sightings of wild animals in the city last night?

KARNAK: Only the two legged kind. Some Greek ships arrived yesterday and their sailors... well, some of them are sleeping off good wine in my cells.

MENTEP: I'm sure you spent some nights in those cells for similar reasons.

KARNAK: I spent nights in those cells to avoid my first wife.

KERIDES: First wife? You've been married more than once?

KARNAK: It doesn't matter. And digging that up doesn't help us with this case.

MENTEP: True. Kerides, don't be put off by there being no reports of wild animals in the city. We live close enough to the desert and the sea that lions, hyenas and crocodiles are not unheard of within Alexandria.

KERIDES: But it's odd that and animal would leave meats in the area of the shop.

MENTEP: Some animals prefer fresh meat.

KERIDES: That's true, but most avoid conflict and take the easiest option of food - which would be the meat on the counters.

MENTEP: A fair point.

KERIDES: A lot of animals are territorial.

KARNAK: Meaning that whatever attacked him...

MENTEP: ...might come back?

KARNAK: It's worth taking a look.

MENTEP: Just let me get my cloak.

KARNAK: We should take weapons.

KERIDES: I have a sword. I'm not particularly good with it yet but I have it.

KARNAK: I have mine as well - and I am good with it.

MENTEP: Then we shall be safe. Come along.

ADREA: Did I miss something? Where are you going?

KERIDES: Adrea! Oh, we're just going...

KARNAK: Be careful what you say, young Thinker.

MENTEP: Pick your words carefully, my boy.

KERIDES: We're going to see if we can find the animal that killed the butcher.

KARNAK: Well, he got that wrong.

MENTEP: Totally. You should have said it was an affair of state.

KERIDES: Why?

KARNAK: Because an affair of state sounds important but actually means absolutely nothing.

MENTEP: Whereas what you said...

KERIDES: The truth.

MENTEP: ...sounds like...

ADREA: Sounds like three grown men who should know better going off in search of adventure like small boys.

KARNAK: She's right.

MENTEP: And of course, it's because we are three grown men who should know better going in search of an adventure.

KERIDES: And a mystery.

ADREA: How can I stay mad at you when you act like this. Oh, I give up. Kerides, you might as well get my cloak as well. If our meal can't compete with a mystery I might as well come with you.

FX: CRICKETS. LATE NIGHT SOUNDS. FOOTSTEPS.

MENTEP: I imagine you've never seen the market look like this before, Adrea.

ADREA: I can't see the market at all. It's too dark.

KERIDES: There's no moon. Perhaps that's why the beast was able to slip into the city without being seen.

ADREA: That doesn't make me feel very safe.

KERIDES: Don't worry. I'll protect you.

ADREA: (QUIETLY, JUST FOR KERIDES)
 But who's going to protect me from you?

KERIDES: (ALSO QUIETLY)
 I didn't think you wanted to be protected from me.

MENTEP: (DISCREET COUGH)
 Are you two still with us?

KERIDES: Yes. Still here.

ADREA: Just... just checking something. We're fine.

KERIDES: Yes, everything's good.

MENTEP: Adrea, my dear, I would say that you know this market better than any of us, even in the dark. Would you lead the way, please?

ADREA: It's so dark I'll probably lead us into the harbour.

MENTEP: With the Pharos lighthouse there, the harbour is probably the only bright part of Alexandria on a night like this.

ADREA: And it's wasted on the sea. Why don't they use it to throw some light on the city?

MENTEP: I'll raise that at the next meeting. Where are we, child?

ADREA: If we came through the first gate back there, we're almost at the incense stall. Yes, it's behind those shutters.

MENTEP: You know the place well?

ADREA: What he charges? Not likely.

KERIDES: Where did the butchers have their stalls?

ADREA: They're more shops than stalls. They're at the far end of the market place... wherever the far end is.

KERIDES: I think it's this way.

ADREA: Are you pointing?

KERIDES: Can you see me?

ADREA: No.

KERIDES: Then, no, I'm not pointing.

ADREA: That sounds like an answer I would give.

KERIDES: I'm learning from you.

ADREA: Smart answer.

KERIDES: The butchers stalls back onto buildings, some with deep cellars that never get warm, even in the day.

KARNAK: Better for storing meat. It lasts longer.

KERIDES: And an animal would be drawn by the scent of meat.

ADREA: I hope they're not drawn to our house. Our supper is still waiting for us there.

KERIDES: I haven't forgotten. It's definitely this way.

ADREA: Which way?

KERIDES: Take my hand.

ADREA: (QUIETLY)
I was hoping you'd say that.

KARNAK: Should we hold your hand, too, young Thinker?

KERIDES: I'd rather you didn't.

KARNAK: So would I. Don't worry, we can follow your voices.

ADREA: Are my eyes playing tricks on me or is the pitch darkness slightly lighter ahead?

KERIDES: Your eyes are adjusting. We can see much better in the dark than you imagine. We just have to get used to it.

MENTEP: At my age I can barely see in daylight.

KARNAK: Nonsense. You see everything that happens in Alexandria.

KERIDES: I think this is where we found the head.

ADREA: It is - but do you have to say it like that?

KERIDES: Like what?

ADREA: The head. Couldn't you say 'the unfortunate man'?

KARNAK: Since we only found part of him he really is unfortunate.

ADREA: You're as bad as Kerides. Could somebody remind me why I came with you three?

KERIDES: This is definitely the place. And Andros, the other butcher, has his stall over there.

ADREA: That's right.

KERIDES: I wonder how he brings the meat in?

ADREA: (NOT SNARKY - MORE WRY)

Don't you pay attention to anything I tell you? He lives behind his shop.

KERIDES: I remember. I was just thinking out loud.

KARNAK: Well, think quietly.

ADREA: There's no need to be rude...

KARNAK: I mean, be quiet. And listen.

ADREA: I don't hear... wait.

FX: SCUFFLING.

ADREA: I hear... something.

KERIDES: Back away, Adrea. This way.

ADREA: Where is it?

FX: SCUFFLING GETTING CLOSER. STALL MOVES.

KERIDES: It's close.

ADREA: I can't see it.

MENTEP: It's getting closer.

FX: SCUFFLING, SNUFFLING, WOODEN STALLS MOVED SUDDENLY.

KARNAK: I can't see anything.

-
FX: SWORD DRAWN.

KARNAK: I'll get it - if I can see it.

MENTEP: I think there's more than one.

ADREA: Kerides? What are they? Kerides? It brushed my leg!

-
FX: A HIGH, ANIMAL SQUEAL.

SECOND COMMERCIAL

FX: A HIGH, ANIMAL SQUEAL.

KARNAK: I got it.

ADREA: What is it? A hyena? A lion?

FX: RECOGNISABLE PIG SQUEAL.

KERIDES: A pig?

MENTEP: Congratulations, General. You wounded a pig.

KARNAK: How was I to know?

ANDROS: Who's there? Are you stealing my pigs?

FX: FLAMING TORCH.

KARNAK: Don't worry. We're not interested in your pigs.

ANDROS: Why not? They're the best quality in Alexandria. Only the other day I had people buying for the Vizier himself.

ADREA: We know - and so does the half of Alexandria you told.

ANDROS: It's you - I recognise that voice. Did the vizier enjoy the meats you bought?

MENTEP: I haven't had the chance to eat them yet.

ANDROS: You...? You're the Vizier? I'm honoured. You must let me send you a selection of my finest meats. Free of charge of course.

ADREA: Except for when you start claiming that you supply Pharaoh's vizier.

ANDROS: You wouldn't deny me a little honest trade, would you?

KARNAK: No, but I might.

MENTEP: That's General Karnak.

ANDROS: An honour... could I send you...

KARNAK: No. What are your pigs doing out in the market?

ANDROS: They broke free. Something must have startled them.

MENTEP: We did think there was the possibility of a wild beast being responsible for killing your colleague.

ANDROS: And you're here... in case it comes back? Are you...?

KARNAK: Are we what?

ANDROS: Never mind.

ADREA: And yes we are. Have you seen anything here tonight? An animal of any sort?

ANDROS: You think I'd be crazy enough to be out here in the dark if I had?

KERIDES: I didn't think you'd be crazy enough to infer that the Vizier and the Head of the Palace guard were crazy for being out here.

ANDROS: I didn't...

MENTEP: Actually, you did, but I won't hang you for it this time.

KARNAK: Tell me, this other butcher who died...

ANDROS: Milios.

KARNAK: Yes, Milios... were you and he friendly?

ANDROS: I wouldn't say that. We were in competition, though his meats were always inferior.

ADREA: And cheaper. He was always busier than you.

ANDROS: Nonsense.

KARNAK: If you're lying I'll torture you and enjoy it.

ANDROS: Then all right, he was busier. People don't want to pay for quality these days.

KERIDES: Your meats are always fresh.

ANDROS: Definitely. I butcher them myself not thirty paces from here.

KARNAK: So you have all the butcher's tools.

ANDROS: Definitely. The finest blades in Alexandria.

KARNAK: Tell me, could these blades take a man's head from his shoulders?

ANDROS: Without a doubt. With one blow most of them could... wait. Why are you asking that?

KARNAK: You and Milios weren't friends, he was taking your trade...

KERIDES: Was he taking something else, I wonder? Your pigs broke out... I wonder if the gate to their pen had been forced. I can't imagine a man as careful about his business as you would ever leave the gate to a pen broken.

ADREA: What? You think he killed the other butcher?

ANDROS: Me? I didn't do anything to him.

ADREA: I really don't want to ask this... Kerides only found the head. What would he have done with the rest of the body? He's a butcher and I wish I hadn't asked that question.

KERIDES: He did say he had some unusual meat on his stall.

ADREA: Oh, that is disgusting. I almost bought that. Hey, there was none of your friend in the meat you sent us, was there? I cooked that! I might have cooked him! Ugh. My hands are never going to feel clean again.

KARNAK: So, what do you have to say, butcher?

ANDROS: I didn't do anything. You said it was a wild animal. A lion or something.

KERIDES: It wasn't a lion. Milios's killer is in this market place right now.

ADREA: So it is him... no, it isn't him, is it?

KERIDES: How do you know?

ADREA: I know you. I'm getting to know how your mind works. Not the weird way you work everything out. I know the way you let everyone think one thing has happened and then hit them from the side with the truth.

KERIDES: Do I do that?

ADREA, MENTEP, KARNAK:
(CHORUS)
Yes.

ADREA: So what really happened?

KERIDES: I think Milios was stealing animals from Andros here.

KARNAK: That doesn't sound good for you, butcher.

KERIDES: But I don't think Andros killed him.

ADREA: I thought you said the killer was here.

KERIDES: He is. Or she is. I don't know. I didn't think of it at the time, but when I found Milios's head, it was filthy and covered in dirt. That should have told me so much but I missed it at the time.

ADREA: You were busy trying to stop me being sick at the time.

KERIDES: That's true.

MENTEP: Don't keep us in suspense my boy. It's late.

KERIDES: I think that if we look at Milios's head again, we'll find the dirt on it comes from the pig pen.

ADREA: You'll be checking that on your own. Sorry, carry on.

KERIDES: Milios was stealing animals from your pen, Andros, but I assume he slipped on... well, I think we can guess what he slipped on.

ADREA: Oh this just keeps getting worse.

KERIDES: The worst is still to come. In the north, they used to throw dead bodies to their pigs.

ADREA: The pigs ate them?

KERIDES: I knew a farmer who said pigs would eat anything. I think your pigs ate Milios. I just hope he was dead from the fall.

ADREA: I'm never eating pig meat again. And neither are you. Not if you ever want to kiss me.

KARNAK: What makes you think Andros isn't involved?

KERIDES: He could be, but I doubt if he would have left the head lying around. Why not just let the pigs eat it?

ADREA: Kerides, do you mind?

KERIDES: And when we first met Andros he mentioned that he'd had to round up some of his animals. I think we'll find whatever's left of Milios in the pig pen.

KARNAK: So the murderer... is a pig?

FX: PIG SNORTS.

KERIDES: I think so.

KARNAK: Well, I've met a few killers I would describe as animals but this is a new one on me.

MENTEP: I'm not sure how we try the killer either.

KARNAK: I'm pretty sure my men will find a way to deal with him.

ADREA: Talking of that... we still have food at home...

MENTEP: From his pigs?

KERIDES: I'm not hungry.

ADREA: Neither am I.

MENTEP: Lost my appetite.

SHOPPING CAN BE MURDER

Notes

Not Every script is a favourite. Sadly we go from one of my very favourites in ‘Brother, Can You Spare A Crime?’ to one that I don’t have the same love for, in ‘Shopping Can Be Murder’. The odd thing is, I’m not sure why I don’t have the same affection for it. It was certainly an unusual one to write. Claire was on maternity leave when we were plotting and it was all done by text message. We didn’t discuss it face to face at all.

And then there’s the general feel of it... it feels like it belongs earlier in the series, when we were finding our feet with the show. It still has the regulars, all of whom are in top form, but it feels out of place to me at this point in the series.

For a while we had been doing mini-arcs with the series, two or three episodes which were thematically linked. The three before were all about the development of the two leads and their relationship. The next three are all linked by.. well, you’ll soon see how closely they’re linked. The six plays that follow this collection form a single arc. ‘Shopping Can Be Murder’ feels like it’s out of place in a series that’s found its feet and is moving in a slightly different direction. It’s possible that the lack of a villain is part of why I feel this one doesn’t really score highly for me. Or maybe it’s just too light and a comedy all the way through which means it doesn’t have the counterbalance of the tension that comes with confronting the villain. I’m not sure. Of course, I could be wrong. Writers are often too close to their own work. A colleague told me I was talking out of my rear end (not the exact wording he used) and that this was a favourite of his. Sadly, it’s just not a favourite of mine.

That all makes it sound like I hate the story. I don’t. I just think it’s wrong for this point of the series. However, it does have some pretty good stuff in it. Some of the gags made me laugh when I heard them in the finished play. Adrea’s interplay with Andros was particularly well realized. We also seeded something important for the next story in the series. In this episode it’s a throwaway line. In the long run it actually sets up something important for the next episode. That’s one of the real benefits of planning a series the way we do. Feeding threads across episodes is much easier when they’ve planned and written in batches.

KERIDES THE THINKER

THE WALKING DEAD

by Claire Bartlett & Iain McLaughlin

first aired 17th November 2013

CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES: Early 20s, exceptionally bright and maturing into a man of standing.

ADREA: 19. Pretty and feisty.

MENTEP: A Vizier at the court of Pharaoh Ptolemy II.

KARNAK: Head of the Palace Guard.

FENIRA: Female, slightly younger than Karnak.

SERVANT: Couple of lines.

ELIAN: Female, wealthy, social climber.

MAREK: Physician, rubbish at it.

SFX: WALKING THROUGH ALEXANDRIA.

KERIDES: Adrea, for the fifteenth time, you're beautiful.

ADREA: And for the fifteenth time, Kerides, you'd say that even if my face look like a warthog's behind.

KERIDES: Probably but that doesn't change the fact that you really are beautiful.

ADREA: I should be. I spent all day getting ready for this meal.

KERIDES: But it's not how you look that's bothering you, is it?

ADREA: What do you mean?

KERIDES: All day you've been asking who's going to be at this feast.

ADREA: Kerides, I don't mind you using your brain to work out murders for the General but don't start doing your thinky stuff with me.

KERIDES: Thinky stuff?

ADREA: Well, I don't know what else to call it. You know, you really should come up with a proper name for what you do.

KERIDES: I know what to call what you're doing - it's changing the subject.

ADREA: I must be losing my touch. I used to be so good at that.

KERIDES: Why are you so concerned about the people who will be here? Because you used to be a slave? Do you think they'll recognise you?

ADREA: Nobody remembers what a slave looks like. These are some of the most important people in all of Egypt. And they're here at a party...

KERIDES: ...for two nobodies like us?

ADREA: You're not a nobody. You're famous in Alexandria.

KERIDES: I am?

ADREA: Well, kind of. They know your name but not what you look like. Or that we're - you know - together. So I don't get a lot of benefit from it. But I hear them talking about you. The Thinker.

KERIDES: I hate it when they call me that.

ADREA: It's not a bad thing to be called. And it's better than what they'll call me tonight.

KERIDES: What do you mean?

ADREA: (SIGH, PUSHING THOUGHTS ASIDE)
I mean that we'll get a terrible reputation if we turn up late for a banquet being thrown for our marriage.

KERIDES: I think we have time.

ADREA: But we shouldn't be late. Come on.

FX: LOW CHATTER OF THE MEAL.

FENIRA: Wine, sir?

MENTEP: I shouldn't but it would be rude not to... thank you, my dear.

FX: MENTEP TAKES A DRINK OF WINE.

MENTEP: Just don't tell my wife or I'll be in trouble...
(BEAT)
Ah, there you two are.

KERIDES: Vizier Mentep.

MENTEP: Please, my boy, this is a social occasion. I am not vizier tonight. Just an old friend.
You both look well. And Adrea, you look radiant, my dear.

ADREA: Thank you, viz... thank you.

MENTEP: Do you have wine?

KERIDES: Not yet, we only just arrived.

MENTEP: Take my advice, don't waste time before you get some. I know most of the guests here. When it comes to free food and drink they're like locusts. My dear, could we have wine for my young friends here, please?

FENIRA: Sir. Madam.

ADREA: Thank you.

KERIDES: Talking of friends, I don't see General Karnak.

FX: CLATTER OF A GOBLET.

FENIRA: Apologies, sir. I slipped on spilled wine.

MENTEP: No harm done, dear lady. Before the night is over, wine will be causing a lot more people here to fall over.

FENIRA: Thank you, sir.

FX: RECEEDING FOOTSTEPS.

MENTEP: I hope it wasn't me who spilled the wine.

ADREA: I doubt it - you know how to hold your drink.

ADREA& MENTEP:
(TOGETHER, JOKING)
Very tightly!

MENTEP: You know me very well, Adrea.

ADREA: I'm glad I know somebody here.

KERIDES: You didn't say where General Karnak is.

MENTEP: He was called away in the middle of the afternoon.

KERIDES: Is something wrong?

MENTEP: Three bodies were found in the Street of Perfumes.

ADREA: That's not unusual, is it? The Street of Perfumes is between the harbour and the most popular taverns. There are always bodies lying in that street sleeping off wine. Mostly sailors.

MENTEP: True, but only one was a sailor. The others were merchants, I think. And they all died of the same thing.

KERIDES: What was it?

MENTEP: (QUIETLY)

We're not telling anyone yet. We have the area closed off... but the first report was that it was a plague of some sort.

ADREA: Plague?

MENTEP: Quietly, child. We don't know if it was plague or not and it will do us no good to start a panic if it's nothing of the sort.

ADREA: Sorry.

MENTEP: Don't worry, nobody heard.

KERIDES: Perhaps I should go and see if I can help General Karnak.

KARNAK: No need, young Thinker. I'm here.

MENTEP: What did you find, old friend?

KARNAK: The strangest thing. I had the guard physician look at the bodies. I think he was drunk. He couldn't decide if the bodies were dead or not.

ADREA: I'm glad he's not my physician.

KARNAK: He eventually announced them as dead, but he wouldn't say what killed them. He's had them taken to his chambers to examine them.

KERIDES: I might be able to assist him. I saw a village in plague to the far north. Perhaps...

ADREA: Don't even think about abandoning me.

MENTEP: Adrea's right, Kerides. Your place tonight is with her.

SERVANT: Wine for you, General.

KARNAK: Thank you.

(DRINKS)

I need that. Mentep's right, Thinker. You're not working tonight. The last time we tried to have a meal to celebrate your marriage it was ruined. I think Adrea might object if I sent you to...

(BREAKS OFF...)

It can't be...

KERIDES: General? What is it?

MENTEP: What's wrong?

KARNAK: I thought I saw... It must be wine on an empty stomach. Forgive me. I...
(BREAKS OFF AGAIN)

MENTEP: Karnak? Are you all right.

KARNAK: I... I can't...

FX: WINE GOBLET HITS THE FLOOR, KARNAK COLLAPSES.

KERIDES: I've got him.

MENTEP: Get him to a couch.

ADREA: Move. You, get off the couch. Move.

MENTEP: Gently. Gently, Kerides.

KERIDES: General? General?

MENTEP: Someone fetch the physician.

KERIDES: I don't think it'll do any good. I'm sorry, Mentep. He's not breathing.

ADREA: Karnak's dead?

FIRST COMMERCIAL

ADREA: I can't believe Karnak's dead.

MENTEP: I don't want to believe... my old friend... my closest friend...

ADREA: (GENTLY)
Sit down, Mentep.

MENTEP: (SITTING, SHOCKED)
My dear friend... give me some hope, Kerides. Please.

KERIDES: I'm sorry, Mentep. He's not breathing. I can't feel the blood pass through the veins in his neck or his wrist.

MENTEP: What of his heart?

KERIDES: Nothing. I'm sorry.

MENTEP: Sorry isn't good enough! What use are you if you can't help him?
(A MOMENT)
I'm sorry, Kerides. I didn't mean that.

KERIDES: I know. He was your friend a long time.

MENTEP: Friend hardly does him justice. We were closer than brothers. Long before I was a politician he and I fought side by side many times. My dear friend.

ADREA: What killed him? Do you think it was... do you think it was plague?

KERIDES: We have to hope not. He spoke with us. He was near to us. If it was plague...

ADREA: ...we could be next.

MENTEP: Then we need to know the truth. Find it, Kerides.

FX: THE RUMBLE OF CONVERSATION IS CLEAR IN THE BACKGROUND.

ADREA: What do we tell the other guests? If we even mention the word 'plague' they'll panic.

KERIDES: You'll think of something.

ADREA: Me? What can I do?

KERIDES: Whatever you tell them. They can't leave. If there's a chance of us having plague, they might all have it too.

ADREA: They won't listen to me. They're important people. I'm just...

KERIDES: Do you really care what some pampered old women think?

ADREA: Yes.

KERIDES: Really?

ADREA: I don't care for me - I care how it'll affect you. Your career here. I was a slave. My mother is still a slave.

MENTEP: Adrea, I have never doubted your intelligence or your wits. My dear friend Karnak had no doubts about you either. You will think of something.

ADREA: You're right. I will think of something. I just wish I knew what.

KERIDES: Good luck.

ADREA: All right, everybody through into the next room. Everybody move. That includes you. Move. Now.

(BEAT, THEN CALLS)

Kerides, you're sure I can arrest anyone who doesn't do as I say?

FX: MOVING FEET. CROWD HEAD AWAY.

ADREA: That's better. Into the next room then wait.

MENTEP: She's an extraordinary young woman, Kerides. You're a lucky man.

KERIDES: So she tells me.

MENTEP: Then listen to her. The people we love are taken from us too soon. Cherish every moment. I sound like a silly, sentimental old fool, don't I?

KERIDES: No. You sound like a very kind man trying to cope with something nobody is ever prepared to deal with.

MENTEP: We are never ready for death, are we? He was a soldier, a great warrior. Even when he left for battle I always expected him to return. He would rather have died in battle as a soldier should.

KERIDES: Mentep, I'm going to see the physician. I want to know if he has found anything.

MENTEP: Do that. I will watch over Karnak.

KERIDES: I won't be long.

MENTEP: Just find the truth. Time won't affect Karnak now.

KERIDES: All right.

FX: FOOTSTEPS DISAPPEAR.

MENTEP: I won't leave you now, old friend.

FX: CHATTER OF PEOPLE

ELIAN: What's happened? Girl, what happened?

ADREA: My name is Adrea, and we're not completely sure what happened.

ELIAN: Well, find out.

ADREA: I ...

ELIAN: Well, what are you waiting for, girl?

ADREA: Mentep said we should wait here.

ELIAN: Mentep is a grieving old fool. I'm not staying here in a house of death a moment longer.

ADREA: Really, Mentep said we should stay.

ELIAN: And how do you intend to stop me? I don't take instructions from slaves.

ADREA: I'm not a slave. I'm free.

ELIAN: Once a slave, always a slave. Now get out of my way. I'm leaving.

ADREA: Mentep...

ELIAN: ...is a fool. Go back to that idiot Thinker of yours. What sort of name is that anyway?

ADREA: Idiot?
(ANGER BUILDING)
You called Kerides an idiot?

ELIAN: Yes.

ADREA: Listen, you hatchet-faced hyena, you can talk down to me all you like - actually, no you can't because I'm not a slave and even if we're not wealthy like you, I don't have to take that sort of camel dung from anyone. But when you start insulting Kerides - MY Kerides, that makes things different.

ELIAN: Does it, indeed?

ADREA: Bet your life it does, you sour-mouthed troll. Now sit your bony backside down before I sit you down.

ELIAN: My husband will hear of this outrage.

ADREA: He'll probably buy me a bigger house as a thank you. Every slave in Alexandria

knows he's wanted to tell you to shut up for years.

ELIAN: He's what?

ADREA: Sit!
(DISGUSTED SNORT)
Idiot Kerides... I'm the only one who gets to call him that.

FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN. FOOTSTEPS.

KERIDES: Hello? Hello?

FX: DOOR CREAKS SHUT.

KERIDES: Hello? I'm from the palace guard. My name is...

FX: KERIDES GIVES A START AS HE IS INTERRUPTED.

MAREK: ...Kerides. I know who you are.

KERIDES: I didn't see you there.

MAREK: Well, you wouldn't. It's dark here. I was trying to sleep. Now what can I do for you? It's late, you know. I told General Karnak I'd tell him everything I find in the morning. If he wants it sooner, that's too bad.

KERIDES: I'm afraid it's definitely too bad for General Karnak.

MAREK: What do you mean?

KERIDES: Karnak died not long ago in his home.

MAREK: He what? No. He was a fine, strong man.

KERIDES: I know. I need you to tell me about this plague he was investigating.

MAREK: You don't think he died of plague, so you? I mean... I inspected those bodies as well. I could be...

KERIDES: You're still breathing. I don't think you need to worry yet. Where are the bodies?

MAREK: In the next room.

KERIDES: Show me.

MAREK: After what happened to Karnak? Are you mad?

KERIDES: Probably. Now show me where they are.

MAREK: They're through here.

FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

MAREK: But I'm not going in there.

KERIDES: Fine - just stay close enough to talk. Now where are they?

MAREK: What do you mean, where are they? They're on the benches in there. That one...
(BEAT)
...they're gone.

KERIDES: I don't think they are.

MAREK: I left them on the benches. There's no other way out.

KERIDES: (WORRIED)
I know. They're still here.

MAREK: I don't see them...

FX: SHUFFLING, MOANING. THE MOVEMENT AND SOUND OF ZOMBIES.

KERIDES: That's because they're walking!

SECOND COMMERCIAL

FX: SHUFFLING, MOANING, ZOMBIE SOUNDS.

MAREK: They can't be walking. They're dead.

KERIDES: Do you want to tell them that?

FX: RUNNING. DOOR SLAMS.

KERIDES: Push the table against the door.

MAREK: They're demons.

KERIDES: Help me with the table.

FX: TABLE SCRAPES ACROSS STONE FLOOR.

KERIDES: That should keep the door closed.

FX: MOANS AND SOUNDS OF HANDS THUMPING THE DOOR.

MAREK: We must priest to banish their broken souls.

KERIDES: No. We need to get back to Karnak's house.

MAREK: Why?

KERIDES: Why do you think? Come on.

FX: QUIET FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: Vizier? Mentep? Are you all right?

MENTEP: No. Nothing is forever in life, child, but I never thought to lose my friend. I was sure I would die before him. I am older than he is... was.

ADREA: Don't talk like that. You have years ahead of you.

MENTEP: I wonder if it's possible to live too long?

ADREA: Mentep...

MENTEP: I know. I shouldn't talk like that.

ADREA: Mentep. Vizier!

MENTEP: What is it, child? Oh...

FX: MOANING. SHUFFLING, ZOMBIE MOVEMENTS.

ADREA: Karnak's moving.

MENTEP: He's alive?

FX: KARNAK MOANING, LURCHING, SHUFFLING.

ADREA: He doesn't look it to me. Come on.

FX: MOANING, LURCHING FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: Come on!

FX: KARNAK'S MOANING AND LURCHING FOLLOWS.

MENTEP: Karnak?

ADREA: Come on, Mentep. Get away from him. Come on.

FX: HURRYING FOOTSTEPS FOLLOWED BY THE SHUFFLING AND MOANING.

MENTEP: Guards! Guards!

ELIAN: Now what's happening? This is the worst wedding celebration I have ever been to.

ADREA: What's your name?

ELIAN: I am Elian, wife of...

ADREA: Well, Elian, let me introduce you to Shut Up, the wife of Get Out Of The Way and sister to If You Don't Move I'll Punch Your Nose.

MENTEP: She means it. Move, Elian.

ELAIN: This is an... oh...

FX: SHUFFLING, MOANING. KARNAK IS FOLLOWING.

ELIAN: He's walking. The dead are walking.

FENIRA: He's cursed. Karnak's body is cursed. Stop him!

FX: KARNAK SHUFFLING.

MENTEP: Karnak! Karnak, can you hear me?

FX: KARNAK MOANS, SHUFFLES.

FENIRA: He is a demon. He will kill us all!

ELIAN: She's right. Stop him. Mentep, do something.

MENTEP: Guards! Stop him.

FENIRA: Cut him down.

FX: SWORDS DRAWN. RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

ELIAN: Cut him apart.

MENTEP: I can't do that to my friend.

FENIRA: He's cursed.

ELIAN: You must - to save us all.

FENIRA: Do it!

MENTEP: Guards... bring him down.

FX: KARNAK MOANS. SOLDIERS MOVE.

FENIRA: Do it. Do it!

FX: RUNNING FEET.

KERIDES: Stop! Don't hurt him!

ELIAN: He's dead! How can they hurt him?

KERIDES: He's not dead.

FENIRA: Of course he is.

KERIDES: He has been poisoned but he's not dead. Put him on a couch and hold him down.

ADREA: You. Move.

ELIAN: You can't talk to me like that.

MENTEP: Yes she can. And if she can't, I can. Now move.

KERIDES: I need to know what the poison was.

ADREA: Poisoned? I thought it was plague.

ELIAN: Plague? This is a plague house?

ADREA: Yes, plague. Plague. Plague-plague-plague.

ELIAN: Stop saying that.

ADREA: Plague.

KERIDES: Adrea, are you finished?

ADREA: One more - plague! There, now I'm finished.

KERIDES: Good.

ADREA: Plague! Sorry. That one just slipped out.

KERIDES: I'm sure it did.

ADREA: Now what's all this about poison?

KERIDES: There are so many parts of this. They only make sense when I remember something you said.

ADREA: You pay attention to what I say?

KERIDES: Of course I do.

MENTEP: Please tell us, Kerides. Karnak is my friend.

KERIDES: When we got here, Adrea said something. It wasn't important at the time but it brought things together later.

ADREA: You're not going to tell me yet, are you?

KERIDES: Soon. I promise.

ADREA: All right.

KERIDES: There were three men found dead this afternoon. Three very diverse men. A ship's captain, a wine merchant and an importer of rare herbs and spices.

ADREA: A lot of people go to that area to drink.

KERIDES: I know, but I wondered, why were only these three men affected? And why only General Karnak of the soldiers? The physician who tented the bodies would surely be more likely to have been afflicted. And disease is rarely particular about how it chooses its victims.

MENTEP: People, on the other hand...

KERIDES: Exactly. So I started to wonder why those people should be together - and what they could do that would make someone want them to appear dead.

ADREA: And what does it have to do with General Karnak?

KERIDES: Oh, it's all about General Karnak. Those three men were brought together with the single idea of killing General Karnak.

MENTEP: With poison?

KERIDES: Not really.

ADREA: Are you as lost as I am?

MENTEP: Definitely. Kerides? Please?

KERIDES: How would a wine merchant, an importer of spices and a ship's captain come together? Perhaps if the captain imported something for one of the others? A spice to put in the wine, maybe?

MENTEP: It makes sense I suppose.

ADREA: But it can't have been just any spice. Why leave them looking dead if it was something legal? Oh, I'm starting to think like you. That's not good.

KERIDES: You're right. It had to be something illegal, otherwise, why attack the men? Perhaps to try out the spice – or maybe it was a potion not a spice.

ADREA: Keep the witnesses quiet for a while?

KERIDES: Not only that. If they were seen with a hint of plague, who would definitely go to find out more?

MENTEP: Definitely Karnak. Any threat of that sort he would be first there.

ADREA: But how did the potion... drug... whatever get into him? Whoever did this can't have known he would drink something where the bodies were. He'd be crazy if he did.

KERIDES: He didn't. But they knew he would drink when he got back here. So his poisoned drink was waiting for him here. And that's why what you said was so important.

ADREA: And I still don't know what that was.

KERIDES: When we first got here tonight, what did you say?

ADREA: Do I have to say?

KERIDES: Please.

ADREA: I said I was kind of worried about how me being an ex-slave might damage your career.

MENTEP: You mustn't feel that way, child.

KERIDES: And then what? About people remembering slaves.

ADREA: That nobody remembers slaves? That's important?

KERIDES: Yes, because just before General Karnak took his drink, he did recognise someone - and he was looking at a slave.

MENTEP: I remember, but I didn't see who.

KERIDES: That might be because it was a slave.

MENTEP: Or because my eyes aren't what they were.

ADREA: So which slave did he see?

KERIDES: A female one, older...

ADREA: I know who you mean. I'm not sure she's a slave, though. Maybe a servant.

KERIDES: Really? I was sure it was...

MENTEP: (CUTTING ACROSS)
Adrea, who was it?

ADREA: She was here a moment ago. She was shouting for guards to cut Karnak down. There. At the back.

KERIDES: She's trying to get away. Stop her. Guards, stop her.

FX: SCUFFLE.

FENIRA: Let go. Let go of me.

ADREA: She doesn't act like a slave.

FENIRA: Be quiet, girl.

ADREA: Definitely not a slave.

KERIDES: But her manner says she's not a servant either. Who are you? And why did you poison General Karnak?

MENTEP: Tell him. It will be easier to tell him rather than have it tortured from you.

FENIRA: Even you, his best friend, don't remember.

MENTEP: Remember? I've never seen you before...
(SLOW RECOGNITION)
No... It can't be... Fenira?

KERIDES: You know her?

MENTEP: I knew her a long time ago. She was Karnak's wife... for a time.

ADREA: What?

MENTEP: When he was a young soldier. The marriage was ended quickly. He never talked about it. I didn't pry.

ADREA: What poison did you use on him? Does it have a cure?

KERIDES: Time is the cure. It passes from the body in time.

KARNAK: (STRUGGLING)
It... is already... passing...

MENTEP: Don't try to stand.

KARNAK: I will... not... be weak... in my own... house... Thinker. Help me.

KERIDES: I have you.

ADREA: Put your other arm around my shoulders.

KERIDES: We've got you.

KARNAK: Fenira... why?

FENIRA: You give this banquet for the marriage of nobodies but not once since the end of our marriage did you ever spare me a thought.

KARNAK: That is... not... true.

FENIRA: Then why did you let my life become this... agony?

KARNAK: Your father ended our marriage. He had found you a better match. Somewhere along the coast. A merchant was a better prospect than a soldier.

FENIRA: A merchant who lost all my father's money as well as his own. A drunk who womanised and squandered everything we had. And you did nothing to help me.

KARNAK: As you did nothing to stop your father taking you from our house. You were my wife but you walked away from that, looking for position and money. I won't take blame for what happened.

MENTEP: But Fenira will take blame for what has happened here.

FENIRA: Execute me. That is better than the life I have now.

KERIDES: I don't think you can be executed - at least not for murder - four people were poisoned but none are dead. The drug has an interesting property - it gives people the appearance of death, and then of the walking dead as they recover.

ADREA: Why choose something so elaborate?

KERIDES: Because she didn't want to just kill Karnak. She wanted to destroy his reputation as well. If Karnak the monster was slain by his own guard, his house and reputation would be ruined forever, Exactly like she was.

KARNAK: Fenira, I loved you once... I won't take responsibility for what happened to you. But I won't throw you in prison either.

FENIRA: You won't?

FX: COINS CLINK IN A PURSE.

KARNAK: There's enough money here to get you out of Alexandria and get you a house somewhere else. Take it.

FENIRA: Karnak...

KARNAK: Never come back to Alexandria. Your life is forfeit if you do.

FENIRA: I... thank you.

KARNAK: And I thank you - for leaving me all those years ago. If you had stayed, I would never have found the woman who gave me strong children and who is a far better wife than I deserve. Now leave. Never come back.

FENIRA: Yes...

FX: FOOTSTEPS LEAVING.

MENTEP: I didn't recognise her.

KARNAK: Neither did I. Not really. And not only because the years have taken their toll.

MENTEP: How do you feel?

KARNAK: Like I need a drink - but not the poisoned one.

FX: FOOTSTEPS LEAVING.

ADREA: You got it wrong.

KERIDES: How? I worked it out.

ADREA: You called her a slave - but she was pretending to be a servant.

KERIDES: That's true. But you were wrong about something too.

ADREA: Me? What did I get wrong?

KERIDES: You said nobody remembers what slaves look like... when you were a slave, I remembered you.

ADREA: Oh, that's a good answer.

THE WALKING DEAD

Notes

And we're back on track with this one. If the previous story was one I didn't really love, this is one I'm very, very fond of.

A lot of TV shows do episodes which focus on secondary or back-up characters. I remember an episode of Miami Vice, of which I wasn't a huge fan, but they did an episode about two of the other detectives in Crockett and Tubbs' outfit. It was the first time I really noticed a show doing it but I've seen others do it since. I really wanted to do a story that gave more to Mentep and Karnak. They've been in the background, developing their characteristics and quirks, becoming richer for it and I really wanted to do a story that brought them further to the fore.

The forthcoming marriage of Kerides and Adrea had to be part of this story. This was the beginning of a trilogy about the wedding, so the marriage had to be at the heart of it. We wanted the friendship between Karnak and Mentep to be important, too. I can't remember if it was Claire or I who suggested Karnak's ex-wife as a villain. I liked it, though. It put a bit of a shadow over the idea of marriage, but gave Karnak the chance to be openly affectionate about his current wife. And Karnak's apparent death gave Mentep a chance to be more than his usual jovial self. The thought of losing someone who has been your dearest, closest friend for all those years... even the *idea* of it hurts. Mentep had to go through it. I have to say, both actors rose to the challenge admirably. They were both exceptional.

I have to be honest and also admit this – I love zombie stories. I write science fiction and horror as well as crime and mystery and I love watching a good zombie film. Actually, I have been known to enjoy a crummy zombie film as well. I wondered how we could fit a zombie tale into the Kerides format... it had to be plausibly explainable rather than a genuine zombie – because there *are* zombies, you know. Oh, yes. I saw them in films so they must be real. Once we start to mix an ex-wife, zombies, pushing the friendship between Mentep and Karnak... the story started to take shape very quickly.

On a personal level, I have to admit, Karnak's ex is *slightly* based on a former girlfriend of mine. My ex wasn't a murderer (as far as I know) but she had the habit of blaming me for everything that happened in her life even years after we split. The moral of this story? Never tick off a writer – we'll put you in our stories.

This story was another step for Adrea, too. Putting her among the great and good of Alexandria was going to be a test for her... in the end, it's her love for Kerides that stops her feeling inferior. Nobody gets to insult *her* Kerides... except her, of course. And Sarah Schenckan absolutely nailed that scene.

KERIDES THE THINKER

LAST NIGHT OF FREEDOM

by Claire Bartlett & Iain McLaughlin

first aired 22nd June 2014

CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES: Early 20s, exceptionally intelligent, maturing.

ADREA: 19, intelligent, growing in confidence still plenty of attitude.

MENTEP: A Vizier at the court of Pharaoh Ptolemy II.

KARNAK: Head of the Palace Guard.

AMARNA: Adrea's mother, 40s, stubborn as her daughter.

MEDANA: Villain of the piece. An enemy soldier, dangerous.

FX: FLAME FLICKERS.

ADREA: This is fun. The night before my marriage - in my house, all alone.

FX: WOOD CREAKS.

ADREA: Kerides?

-
FX: WIND BLOWS, WOOD CREAKS. SHUTTER HITS ON THE WALL A FEW
TIMES.

ADREA: Stupid wind. Stupid Kerides. You should have been back... where are you?

FX: WIND BLOWS. SHUTTER HIT'S THE WALLS AGAIN.

ADREA: If you won't come home, I'm coming to find you. If nothing else, it'll stop me talking to myself. And you won't be staying out this late when we're married.

FX: WINE POURED. FLAME FLICKERS.

AMARNA: Drink some wine, Adrea.

ADREA: Thank you... mother. It's still strange calling you that.

AMARNA: And it is strange to hear it. Strange - but very good.

ADREA: So... Kerides...

AMARNA: I'm sorry, my daughter. I haven't seen Vizier Mentep since early this afternoon. He and General Karnak took Kerides...

ADREA: ...For his last day as a free man.

AMARNA: Precisely.

ADREA: I'm sure they're all fine.

AMARNA: The vizier won't be when he gets home.

ADREA: Why?

AMARNA: His wife was furious with him - they had guests visiting from Crete and he did not come home in time to greet them.

ADREA: That's not like him at all.

AMARNA: One of General Karnak's slaves was here looking for him. He missed an appointment at the Palace.

ADREA: But he never misses anything. Sometimes I swear he's in two places at the same time.

AMARNA: I'm sure they just lost track of the time in a tavern.

ADREA: Are you?

AMARNA: Aren't you?

ADREA: No, and neither are you.

AMARNA: What are you going to do?

ADREA: That's what are we going to do, mother. We're going to find them and make sure they're all right.

AMARNA: And then?

ADREA: Then we're going to make their lives hell for worrying us so much.

AMARNA: That's what I thought.

ADREA: Kerides... where are you?

FX: FLICKERING TORCH. SCUFFLING ON THE DIRT FLOOR. KERIDES MOANS.

KERIDES: Where am I?

KARNAK: Same place as us, Thinker.

MENTEP: And it's not very comfortable.

KERIDES: Mentep? Karnak? How much did we have to drink?

KARNAK: Not enough to get us in this situation. Unless we're all too old to hold our ale.

MENTEP: We only had two tankards each. Even I can still take that much without falling over.

KARNAK: Which means it wasn't the ale that got us.

KERIDES: Whatever they used to drug us - I wish they hadn't.

KARNAK: Dizzy? Feel like you're going to throw up?

KERIDES: Yes.

KARNAK: The dizziness will pass. The throwing up... well, you'll find out about that for yourself.

KERIDES: Oh, dear.

MENTEP: The question we have to ask is who drugged us? And why have they left us tied in... a particularly untidy cellar?

FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN. FOOTSTEPS.

MEDANES: That is a very good question, old man. I promise you, when you find the answer, you will be sorry you lived long enough to hear it.

FIRST COMMERCIAL

FX: SCUFFLING IN THE SAND.

KARNAK: And what's that supposed to mean? If that's the best threat you can come up with you need to find a new line of work.

MEDANES: The bravado of the soldier. Are you afraid, General Karnak?

KARNAK: People try to kill me most days - including my current and former wives. If I'm not afraid of them I'm certainly not scared of you, little man.

MEDANES: Death does not frighten you?

KARNAK: I wouldn't be much of a soldier if it did. Tell me something - would you brave as brave if my hands weren't tied?

MEDANES: You will never know. But I commend your bravado, soldier. Tell me, are you so brave, old man? Would the Pharaoh's vizier face death?

MENTEP: The vizier would visit death upon you quite happily, even at the cost of his own life.

MEDANES: Brave words.

MENTEP: I have lived a long and full life. I have raised my children and seen them bring forth children of their own. If my life ends now, it will be weighed a success.

MEDANES: Not if your death leads to the fall of Egypt.

MENTEP: What, precisely, does that mean?

MEDANES: You'll find out soon enough. You'll live just long enough to see your precious Egypt destroyed - by your own hand.

FX: FOOTSTEPS, CLOOR CLOSES.

MENTEP: That doesn't sound good.

KARNAK: Not one bit. Who do you think he is?

MENTEP: I don't know. Kerides, you're unusually quiet.

KERIDES: He didn't mention me.

KARNAK: Is your ego hurt, boy?

KERIDES: Not at all. It may be an advantage.

MENTEP: How so?

KERIDES: Inside Alexandria, I have gained a certain reputation. According to Adrea, anyway. It drives her crazy. Now, if our captor doesn't know who I am, it probably means he hasn't been here long. And unless my ears mislead me, his accent sounds like he is from the south west.

MENTEP: He works for Antiochus Soter?

KARNAK: That Greek hyena has been trying to steal parts of Egypt's lands for years.

MENTEP: It seems he's trying something more direct. If we are to see Egypt destroyed the attack must be upon Alexandria itself.

KERIDES: And what better time to attack than tomorrow when most of the city's most prominent people will be gathered...

MENTEP: ...for your marriage.

KERIDES: Exactly.

KARNAK: I always knew marriage was a bad idea.

FX: DOOR SLAMS SHUT. WINDS WHISTLES. WE'RE OUTDOORS.

ADREA: (LOUD)
Well, thanks for nothing!

AMARNA: Men will seldom tell the truth about other men - especially to the other man's wife.

ADREA: I'm not his wife yet. And I told that innkeeper it was a matter of life and death.

AMARNA: Perhaps he thought that you intended to kill Kerides if you found him.

ADREA: I just might... but I'm more likely to kill that unhelpful bar-keeper in there. Still, at least we know they were here before they moved on.

AMARNA: But we don't know where they went after here.

ADREA: And we have no way of finding out.

AMARNA: Unless we visit every tavern in Alexandria.

ADREA: If we try that we'll still be looking for them on my first anniversary. No, I need to think... what would Kerides do in this situation?

AMARNA: You know him far better than I, daughter. Should I ask how well?

ADREA: (EMBARRASSED)
Mother! No you should not. And now is not the time for a pre-marriage mother-daughter conversation. Maybe after we find Kerides and make sure there actually will be a marriage...

AMARNA: As you wish.

ADREA: Kerides would use that huge brain of his. He'd take all the facts and start to work them into a story that makes sense.

AMARNA: We have very few facts, Adrea.

ADREA: We know they started their drinking here - and by the way, Kerides will not be going out drinking like this after we're married.

AMARNA: Adrea?

ADREA: Sorry, I just really needed to say that. So, we use our brains to work out where they would go next.

AMARNA: There is another tavern further along this street.

ADREA: No, the people who go there are really rough. Mentep would get far too much bad attention there. And Mentep is the key.

AMARNA: I don't follow.

ADREA: He's still as smart as a jackal and as brave as a lion but he is getting old. Kerides and Karnak wouldn't want someone of Mentep's age to walk far. A few minutes in the afternoon sun would be tiring for him.

AMARNA: So they went somewhere close by.

ADREA: And it had to be somewhere Mentep wouldn't get a lot of attention. Oh, and somewhere Karnak wouldn't scare the local drinkers. Which means it had to be one of the more classy places.

AMARNA: So we are looking for a tavern that caters for wealthy customers and is within a few minutes' walk.

ADREA: Exactly, there can't be many.

AMARNA: But which direction do we take? The streets lead in all four directions. They could have taken any of these streets.

ADREA: Away from the palace.

AMARNA: How do you know?

ADREA: They're men. They're just starting their day – their drinking binge. They'd be moving away from the palace so they could really start having fun. This way... I hope...

FX: SCUFFING IN CELLAR.

KARNAK: Have either of you managed to loosen your ropes?

MENTEP: No. I'm losing all feeling in my hands.

KERIDES: I thought I had but the knot won't move.

KARNAK: I haven't managed to move mine either.

KERIDES: Maybe we could find something to cut them with.

KARNAK: It would be easier to search if we weren't completely in the dark.

KERIDES: I know.

KARNAK: Can you get to your feet?

KERIDES: (STRAINING A BIT)
Yes.

MENTEP: I fear my bones are too old for that, my friend.

KARNAK: Never mind.

FX: KARNAK STRUGGLING TO HIS FEET.

KARNAK: There. It feels better just to be standing up.

FX: FOOTSTEPS SHUFFLE IN THE DIRT.

KARNAK: How big is the cellar.

KERIDES: 7, 8... Ow!

FX: KERIDES BUMPING INTO A LARGE EARTHENWARE WINE JAR.

KARNAK: What is it?

KERIDES: It feels like a wine jar. A big one. And there are lots of them.

KARNAK: How many?

KERIDES: They in rows... 8 wide. I can't tell how far back the cellar goes but my voice doesn't come back from the wall as it would if the wall was close.

KARNAK: So there's a lot of wine down here. At least that's something.

MENTEP: It is?

KARNAK: If things go badly at least we can really get Kerides stinking drunk on his last day of freedom.

MENTEP: All three of us already have enough of a hangover,

KERIDES: If I can break the lid of one of these jars we might be able to use it to cut out ropes.

KARNAK: Good thinking.

FX: KERIDES STRAINING, TRYING TO MOVE THE LID. LID MOVES ON JAR.

KERIDES: I've almost got it.

FX: LID TOPPLES TO THE FLOOR AND SMASHES.

KARNAK: Good work, young Thinker.

KERIDES: (SNIFFING)
Oh.

KARNAK: What does 'oh' mean?

MENTEP: Tell us, my boy.

KERIDES: It means we won't be getting drunk on these barrels.

MENTEP: Why not?

KERIDES: They don't have wine in them. I think it's pitch.

KARNAK: Pitch?

FX: KARNAK SNIFFS.

KARNAK: He's right. Pitch. Try to get another lid off, Kerides.

FX: SCUFFLE THEN JAR LID FALLS.

KERIDES: (SNIFFING)
Pitch in this one, too.

MENTEP: So it's safe to assume that it's pitch in all of them.

KARNAK: And that's a lot of pitch.

KERIDES: Now we know how he plans to destroy Egypt.

KARNAK: He could set large parts of the city on fire with this but he'll never get it into the Palace.

KERIDES: Vizier Mentep. He said you would be responsible for Egypt's fall... what did he mean by that?

MENTEP: How should I know?

KERIDES: Were you wearing any seals of office? Anything that could be used as identification? He said Egypt would fall by your hand.

MENTEP: No. For this one afternoon I was just an old man enjoying time with his friends. I had nothing except...

KARNAK: Except?

MENTEP: My ring of office. It has my seal on it. And it's gone. It was on my finger and it's gone. They'll be able to use that to take the pitch straight into the palace.

KARNAK: Then they'll burn it to the ground.

SECOND COMMERCIAL

FX: WIND. WOODEN DOOR SLAMS CLOSED.

ADREA: PERVERT!

AMARNA: Adrea!

ADREA: You heard what he said! He thought we were... never mind. I thought that was a classy place!

AMARNA: Men are men whether they have money or not.

ADREA: Well, he's lucky to still have... anything.

AMARNA: This brings us no closer to finding your Kerides.

ADREA: I know. There's only one place left in the area it could be. It's just along this street.

AMARNA: You seem to know the taverns of Alexandria very well.

ADREA: Well, I... mother, did you just call me a drunk?

AMARNA: No.

ADREA: Good.

AMARNA: But too much wine is a problem, my dear. If you...

ADREA: When I was a slave my master liked to visit taverns. I got to know where they are. I know the city. That's all.

AMARNA: If you say so.

ADREA: I do. We are going to talk about this later.

AMARNA: I'm sure we will.

ADREA: There. That's the last place it could be... oh.

AMARNA: Oh?

ADREA: It's closed.

AMARNA: So it's not the place we're looking for.

ADREA: I must have got it all wrong. I was sure it made sense.

AMARNA: It was a good idea, Adrea. You can't blame yourself that it didn't work.

ADREA: I don't. I blame Kerides.

AMARNA: Why?

ADREA: Does there have to be a reason?

AMARNA: Until you're married, yes.

ADREA: Oh. Pity.

AMARNA: Your words are angry but your tone speaks of love and concern.

ADREA: I can't help it. He's just... he's just...

AMARNA: I understand exactly what that means.

ADREA: You do?

AMARNA: I do. Any woman who has been in love does.

ADREA: You know what I don't understand?

AMARNA: Tell me.

ADREA: I don't understand why that tavern is closed. It's always busy. It's one of the most

prosperous in this area. Why would it be closed this early in the day?

AMARNA: I thought you were talking about Kerides?

ADREA: I am. Well, I was... but I still don't know why that tavern is closed.

AMARNA: You could ask. There is a light in one of the windows.

ADREA: That's even stranger. If someone's there, the place should be open.

AMARNA: Perhaps.

ADREA: Let's go take a look.

AMARNA: There could be any number of reasons for the tavern being closed. Illness? Perhaps a death in the family. Trade may have fallen. It happens.

ADREA: I suppose I could be jumping to conclusions.

AMARNA: Possibly.

FX: MARCHING FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: Somebody's coming.

AMARNA: That's hardly unexpected. This is a busy street.

ADREA: Lots of somebodies. Come on. Hide in here.

AMARNA: Adrea, this is silly.

ADREA: This must be what it's like being Kerides. I'm him and you're me.

AMARNA: What are you talking about?

ADREA: I hope I'm not this difficult. Get in the doorway, mother. Don't argue.

AMARNA: Oh, very well.

FX: FOOTSTEPS CLOSE, DOOR OPENS.

ADREA: That's a lot of people going into a closed tavern.

AMARNA: There must be a dozen at least.

ADREA: And they're not lighting a lamp.

FX: HORSE AND CART.

ADREA: Now what?

AMARNA: Let me see. A horse and cart.

ADREA: A big one by the sound of it.

AMARNA: It is.

FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN. MEN GRUNTING AND STRAINING.

MEDANES: Load the jars, quickly.

FX: HEAVY IMPACTS OF THE JARS ON THE CART.

AMARNA: That's a lot of wine.

ADREA: Why would a tavern be getting rid of that much wine?

AMARNA: He could be selling the business.

ADREA: Wouldn't he sell the wine as part of the business?

AMARNA: How should I know?

MEDANES: Take the jars to the palace. And handle it carefully. This ring will give you free entry to the palace.

AMARNA: How can a ring give access to the palace?

ADREA: Only two people have rings that show that kind of power - Pharoah and the Vizier.

AMARNA: Mentep.

ADREA: So they were here.

MEDANES: Deposit the jars around the city at the locations you were given.

AMARNA: We should summon the guard.

ADREA: If we do we'll lose track of that cart. And I want to know if Kerides and the others are in there.

AMARNA: How do we do that?

ADREA: I'm working on it.

FX: HARD KICKING ON WOODEN DOOR.

KARNAK: Let is out! Where have you taken that pitch? Let us out!

MENTEP: They've gone?

KARNAK: I think so.

MENTEP: Then you can stop breaking your foot on that door.

KARNAK: Whatever they're doing, we don't have long. We need to get free.

KERIDES: (WORKING, STRAINING)
I'm almost through my ropes. We were lucky they didn't take the broken jar lid. There. It's done.

KARNAK: Get us free.

FX: ROPES UNDONE.

KERIDES: There.

KARNAK: Good.

MENTEP: Oh, thank you, my boy. Help me up.

FX: STEPS IN THE DIRT - OPN THE STAIRS. A THUMP ON THE DOOR.

KARNAK: It's still bolted.

MENTEP: What do we have in the cellar here?

KARNAK: It would help if we could see.

KERIDES: I think - yes, I've found an oil lamp.

MENTEP: Is there a flint?

KERIDES: I can't feel one... wait... yes.

-
FX: FLINT BEING STRUCK. ONCE, TWICE.

KERIDES: There.

MENTEP: Shield your eyes a moment. It will take time for your eyes to adjust.

KARNAK: We don't have time for that. What do we have?

MENTEP: Not much by the look of things.

KARNAK: A few small jars of pitch, nothing more. It's useless unless we plan to burn the house down.

KERIDES: I'm not sure...

MENTEP: You have a plan.

KERIDES: I might...

KARNAK: That's better than either of us. Tell me what you're thinking.

KERIDES: We need a jar of pitch and the ropes we were bound with.

KARNAK: Got them.

KERIDES: If we dip one of the short ropes in the pitch... like that... and then jam the mouth of the pitch jar against the door. But put one end of the rope in the jar. Trail the other end out...

KARNAK: Like this? We'll never burn our way through in time.

KERIDES: I hope we won't have to. Now we have to tie the jar in place.

KARNAK: (TYING)
It's tied good and tight under the handle.

KERIDES: Mentep, would you pass me that stool.

MENTEP: It's broken. It'll never take your weight.

KERIDES: It doesn't have to. Just the weight of the oil lamp under the jar.

KARNAK: Now what?

KERIDES: Light the trailing end of the rope.

KARNAK: And?

KERIDES: Hope?

FX: FISTS POUND ON WOODEN DOOR.

AMARNA: (LOUD AND DRUNK-SOUNDING)
Open up! Open the door. I want a drink! Open up!

MEDANES: We're closed. Go away.

FX: FISTS THUMP THE DOOR.

AMARNA: Give me a drink!

FX: DOOR OPENS.

MEDANES: said go away.

AMARNA: Out of my way. I want a drink.

ADREA: Mother...

MEDANES: Get her out of here.

ADREA: She's been out drinking all day.

AMARNA: Give me wine!

MEDANES: Get out!

ADREA: She's not listening. To anyone - even me - like when I told her not to come beating on your door.

AMARNA: Don't talk about me like that. I'm your mother! And you - Wine! Now!

MEDANES: Will you leave if I give you one wine?

ADREA: Yes.

AMARNA: Probably.

ADREA: You mean 'yes', mother. I'll get her the wine.

MEDANES: Stay where you are. I'll get it.

ADREA: Why aren't you open anyway?

MEDANES: That's none of your concern.

ADREA: But this place is usually busy.

MEDANES: Do you want the wine or not.

AMARNA: Of course we do.

FX: POURING.

MEDANES: Here. Drink it and go.
(BEAT)
Wait. What's that on your shoulder.

AMARNA: Keep your hands off.

MEDANES: The mark of a slave. You're a slave?

ADREA: Not any more. She used to be.

MEDANES: What kind of slave barges into a tavern like this?

ADREA: A drunk one?

MEDANES: Let me smell your breath?

AMARNA: Get off.

ADREA: Let her go.

MEDANES: (SNIFFING)
You don't smell of wine. What are you doing here?

ADREA: I said, let her go.

FX: KNIFE PULLED.

MEDANES: I'll get to you once I've carved the truth from this one.

AMARNA: Run, Adrea.

MEDANES: I'll cut her apart if you do.

ADREA: Mother?

MEDANES: Best if I just kill you both.

AMARNA: Run, Adrea.

NEDANES: You're both dead.

FX: EXPLOSION. ROOM SHAKES. YELLS FROM ALL.

MEDANES: (COUGHING)
Who's with you?

KARNAK: We are.

MEDANES: You're free?

KARNAK: I asked how brave you would be if ever I was free...

FX: DOOR OPENS. MEDANES RUNS.

KARNAK: You won't get away.

FX: YELL FROM MEDANES. CLATTER OF WOOD.

ADREA: You're right, he won't. We put a pile of timber in the dark outside the tavern. If we had to run we would know it was there and whoever was in here wouldn't.

KARNAK: I've got him.

KERIDES: What about the pitch?

ADREA: It's on the back of a cart. They're placing it around Alexandria and most of it was being taken to the palace. The cart went... that way.

MENTEP: We must get to the palace.

KARNAK: My men will round them up. And this pig will talk.

MEDANES: I'll say nothing.

KARNAK: We'll see. Come on. Good work.

KERIDES: It was nothing, General. I knew that some kinds of pitch give off a gas that burn violently and... oh. You weren't talking to me.

KARNAK: Opening the door was good, Thinker. Your woman tracked us down. That's better. Come on, you.

MEDANES: I won't talk.

MENTEP: Amarna, would you help me, please. I'm not moving as freely as I would like.

AMARNA: Yes, Vizier. Take my arm.

FX: FOOTSTEPS LEAVE.

KERIDES: You found us.

ADREA: I did. Well, we did. My mother helped.

KERIDES: How?

ADREA: By thinking the way you do. I was worried sick about you. I thought... well, pretty much the worst I thought wasn't half as bad as what happened.

KERIDES: Well, we're all right now.

ADREA: I'll drink to that.

KERIDES: I don't think I'll be drinking for a while.

ADREA: Good answer. Oh, I have two things for you.

KERIDES: What?

FX: SHE THUMPS HIM.

KERIDES: Ow!

ADREA: That's for scaring me. And this...

FX: A KISS.

ADREA: ...is for being safe.

MENTEP: (CALLING)
Come on, you two. You're getting married in the morning.

LAST NIGHT OF FREEDOM

Notes

Okay, so there's going to be a wedding. What does that mean? It means there's going to be what we call in the UK a Stag-Do or in the States it's a Bachelor Party. The groom's friends take him out, get him appallingly drunk and generally embarrass him with a last night of wildness before he becomes a respectable, married pillar of the community.

Kerides *had* to have one of those. He had to. I'm pretty sure *The Hangover* was either playing at the movies or was on TV Movie Channels a lot when this was all being put together. Initially the idea was quite light. It would be a caper but as we started pulling together plans for the three stories, we began seeding ideas from episode 15, 'Until Death Do Us Part' into this story, and we jettisoned the lightweight plot and made it a darker tale which acted as a prelude to the double-length wrap up to the marriage storyline... which in turn is a lead-in to a longer story arc... we don't just throw this together, you know. Pulling this together we started to see the title, 'Last Night of Freedom' as less of a joke on Kerides' last night as a bachelor and the possibility that this was the last night Alexandria would be a free city.

We also used this to seed something that will be a large part of episodes 16 to 21 and will actually have a lasting effect on the series and the characters going forward from there. What is it? We're not telling – those stories haven't aired at the time of writing.

All in all, this wasn't the story we set out to write but it turned into something far more interesting and far more relevant to the series as a whole.

But we did get some jokes in there, too.

KERIDES THE THINKER

UNTIL DEATH DO US PART

by Claire Bartlett & Iain McLaughlin

first aired 30th November 2014

CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES:

ADREA:

MENTEP:

KARNAK:

AMARNA:

MEDANES:

POJIN: Messenger, just a few lines.

CROWD NOISES

FX: DOOR CREAKS.

AMARNA: (PROUD MOTHER)
Adrea...

ADREA: Yes, mother?

AMARNA: You look... you look...

ADREA: Please say something good.

AMARNA: Something good would hardly do you justice, my daughter.

ADREA: Really?

AMARNA: I doubt if Alexandria has ever seen a more beautiful bride.

ADREA: (STILL UNCOMFORTABLE WITH COMPLIMENTS)
Oh... you're just saying that because you're my mother.

AMARNA: I say it because it's true. And I think your young man, Kerides, will agree with me.

ADREA: He will...

AMARNA: ...if he knows what's good for him?

ADREA: Maybe?

AMARNA: Or because he calls you beautiful even on days when you know you don't look
your best.

ADREA: That's him.

AMARNA: He is a good man, Adrea. You have chosen well.

ADREA: I don't remember actually choosing. It just sort of happened.

AMARNA: That is often the way.

ADREA: I'll take your word for it.

AMARNA: Let me help you with that dress. You're twisting the shoulder strap.

ADREA: (UNCERTAIN)

Mother...

AMARNA: Yes? There. That's much better.

ADREA: Thank you. I was going to ask... never mind.

AMARNA: Ask what? You can ask me anything. I am your mother.

ADREA: I can ask you anything but that doesn't mean you'll answer.

AMARNA: No more than you.

ADREA: At least now I know where I get my stubborn streak from.

AMARNA: Now what were you going to ask?

ADREA: Never mind. It's too late for a mother-daughter talk about the evils of men.

AMARNA: Men aren't evil, my dear. Your father was simply weak and after him I spent twenty years with the kindest of men. The trick is to ensure that they think they're in charge.

ADREA: And?

AMARNA: Have a big stick nearby when you need to prove they're not.

FX: THEY LAUGH TOGETHER. A MOTHER-DAUGHTER BONDING MOMENT.

AMARNA: He will be good to you.

ADREA: I know. I don't need a stick for Kerides.

AMARNA: But keep one anyway. He might like it.

ADREA: (SHOCKED)
Mother!

FX: WINE POURED.

MENTEP: Some wine, Kerides?

KERIDES: The last time we shared wine together, we all wound up drugged and thrown into a cellar.

KARNAK: It's not the wildest bachelor party I've ever been to.

(POINTEDLY)

Eh, Mentep?

MENTEP: Quietly, Karnak. If my wife hears we will both be lucky to see Kerides married.

KARNAK: I'll take a wine.

MENTEP: Why doesn't that surprise me?

KARNAK: You're the one who opened the wine jar.

MENTEP: That didn't surprise me, either.

FX: WINE POURED.

KARNAK: Thank you.

MENTEP: We should have a toast.

KARNAK: Young Thinker, you've come a long way since that first time we saw you in the palace.

MENTEP: Covered in smoke and dirt from a fire.

KARNAK: I almost executed you for that, didn't I?

KERIDES: I think you thought about it.

KARNAK: I think about executing everybody at least once a day. It's a perk of the job.

MENTEP: But you won't think of executing Kerides today.

KARNAK: I don't need to - he's committing himself to a life sentence today.

KERIDES: Do your wives know you talk about them this way?

KARNAK: Of course they do. They say the same about us.

MENTEP: It's part of the fun.

KARNAK: And proof that you've still got a lot to learn, young Thinker.

MENTEP: We should leave the boy in peace, Karnak.

KARNAK: Give the condemned man a few moments with his thoughts, eh?

MENTEP: We'll be outside, Kerides. Mingling.

KARNAK: And enjoying this wine.

KERIDES: It's very kind of you to arrange our marriage here in the palace, Mentep.

MENTEP: My pleasure my boy.

KARNAK: Let's go mingle, Mentep.

MENTEP: Lead on, General.

KARNAK: Next time we see you, Thinker, you'll be joining our club. Heaven help you.

MENTEP: We won't be far away.

FX: DOOR CREAKS SHUT.

KERIDES: (SIGHS)
And they're my friends...
(HAPPIER, CONFIDENT)
Today is going to be a great day.

FX: DOOR CREAKS.

KERIDES: General, I'm not going to be scared of my marriage day... wait, who are you?

POJIN: My name is Pojin. I was looking for General Karnak – or you. If you're the one he calls the Thinker.

KERIDES: Why?

POJIN: There's been a murder.

KERIDES: Where?

POJIN: Out beyond the harbour.

KERIDES: Who was killed?

POJIN: I don't know. Will you come?

KERIDES: I can't... I have to be here... I don't have time to go to the harbour... do I?

FIRST COMMERCIAL

FX: CHATTER. WINE POURED.

KARNAK: It's a big turn out, Mentep.

MENTEP: Nobody resists an invitation from General Karnak.

KARNAK: Or Vizier Mentep. How many did you bully into coming?

MENTEP: Quite a few. It will be good for Kerides and Adrea to have influential people at their marriage.

KARNAK: I imagine there are a few more than a little put out that you didn't invite them.

MENTEP: There are more than enough good people in Alexandria that I saw no need to invite the less agreeable.

KARNAK: That's why I didn't invite them either.

FX: A TRUMPET FANFARE.

KARNAK: You're up.

FX: SWISH OF CURTAIN.

MENTEP: Adrea, my dear. You look... if I was thirty years younger...

KARNAK: You'd still be twenty years too old. But he's right. Kerides is a lucky man.

ADREA: Thank you. Both. But I didn't expect the fanfare.

KARNAK: That was my idea.

ADREA: It's kind of embarrassing.

KARNAK: I know.

ADREA: And you did it anyway?

KARNAK: Nobody will forget it's your marriage today.

MENTEP: He was being nice, my dear. In his own way...

ADREA: In that case, thank you, General. I think.

KARNAK: Amarna, don't stay back there out of sight. Adrea's your daughter. Join us.

AMARNA: With respect, General, it is not fitting or proper for me to be with you all in public like this. I am a slave.

MENTEP: Today, you are not a slave, Amarna.

ADREA: You're my mother.

KARNAK: If it makes you feel better, Mentep could make it an order.

AMARNA: That would be a great kindness.

ADREA: Mother, I swear I don't understand you.

AMARNA: What is there to understand?

MENTEP: (CUTTING AN HINT OF ARGUMENT)
Ladies... are you early?

ADREA: Excuse me? Oh. Yes. I think we are.

MENTEP: Then we should bring out Kerides and get under way.

KARNAK: I'll go get him.

MENTEP: I wouldn't hear of it. You enjoy your wine. I'll go.

KARNAK: You're standing in for the bride's father, you should stay. I'll...

ADREA: I've never seen two grown men so afraid to be left alone with two women.

KARNAK: Be fair - it looked like you two were going to argue.

ADREA: You two stay here. I'll go and get Kerides.

MENTEP: All right. But we weren't afraid.

KARNAK: Not even a little.

MENTEP: Amarna... would you care for some wine?

FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

ADREA: Kerides? Kerides, are you...

FX: FLAP OF A CLOAK BEING PUT ON.

KERIDES: Adrea.

ADREA: Kerides, are you thinking of leaving?

KERIDES: Yes.

ADREA: What?

KERIDES: Well, no.

ADREA: This had better be the best - and quickest - explanation of your life.

KERIDES: This man, Pojin, just told me about a murder. He asked me to take a look.

ADREA: On the day of your marriage?

KERIDES: He didn't know I was getting married.

ADREA: The way this explanation is going, that's not a certainty.

KERIDES: Yes it is.

ADREA: Don't look at me like that - I'm being mad with you.

KERIDES: I thought I had time to look quickly and be back before I was missed.

ADREA: Why don't you get someone else to investigate. Maybe General Karnak?

KERIDES: How many wines has the General taken already? Most of the people who would investigate are out there celebrating our marriage.

ADREA: We could learn something from them.

KERIDES: If you ask me not to go, I won't. I'll tell Pojin to try to find someone else to look at the murder victim.

ADREA: Oh, that's not fair. If I say not to go I'll just feel guilty about the murder not being looked into. If I say you should go, I'll have to explain to everyone out there where you've gone.

KERIDES: I promise, I'd be as quick as I can.

ADREA: I know you will - because I'm coming with you to make sure of it.

KERIDES: Adrea...

ADREA: I am not going out there to explain to everyone - especially my mother - that my future husband would rather be with a dead body than with his new wife – who has spent the entire day so far trying to look gorgeous for him, and which he hasn't commented on yet, by the way.

KERIDES: All right, we both go. And we will be quick, I promise.

ADREA: Good. Come on.

KERIDES: And Adrea, even if I don't say how beautiful you are, you know it's what I'm thinking.

ADREA: I... oh, you make it so hard to stay mad at you.

KERIDES: I'm glad. Come on. We should hurry.

FX: WINE POURED.

MENTEP: Another wine, Amarna?

AMARNA: Thank you, but no, Vizier. Adrea is taking a long time to return with Kerides.

MENTEP: This is an important day for them. I'm sure they have a great deal to talk about. They're probably just enjoying a few moments alone together before they join us.

AMARNA: You must be right.

FX: WAVES LAP. GULLS SQUAWK. ADREA COUGHING.

ADREA: That smell is disgusting.

KERIDES: The fish are rotting. They've been in the boat under the sun all day.

ADREA: The birds have been at them.

KERIDES: It's not just the fish they've been at.

ADREA: What do you mean? Oh... that's even more disgusting. Can't we cover him up?

KERIDES: I need to examine the body.

ADREA: This doesn't look like that much of a mystery. His throat's been cut.

KERIDES: Not just cut. It's been slashed through really deeply. If you look you can see bone...

ADREA: I could - if I was looking, which I'm not.

KERIDES: Oh. It is gruesome, isn't it?

ADREA: What girl doesn't want to spend her wedding day looking at a man who's had his throat cut?

KERIDES: Interesting... so are the fish...

ADREA: Really? They just look like fish to me.

KERIDES: What about here and here?

ADREA: Squashed fish?

KERIDES: Exactly.

ADREA: You know this means nothing to me, right?

KERIDES: What do you make of these?

ADREA: Holes in the side of the boat?

KERIDES: Yes.

ADREA: The boat must have hit rocks.

KERIDES: This is quite fascinating.

ADREA: You know what happened?

KERIDES: I have an idea - at least for part of what happened.

ADREA: Are you going to tell me or do I have to nag it out of you?

KERIDES: You could tell me what you think happened.

ADREA: That's what you do. Why would I have a dog and bark myself? Not that I'm calling you a dog.

KERIDES: Please?

ADREA: Oh, all right. There was obviously more than one person on the boat. The fish have been trampled on a lot.

KERIDES: I agree. Go on.

ADREA: There was a fight between the two of them and this one had his throat cut.

KERIDES: What happened to the other one? And why did they fight? And how did the boat come by the holes in its side?

ADREA: Maybe the boat hit rocks? And they could have fought... maybe two fishermen fighting over a catch? Or maybe they fought over a woman? A crime of passion. You remember passion? It's quite popular on wedding days?

KERIDES: I believe you.

ADREA: Did I get any of it right? At all?

KERIDES: You were right about there being more than one person on board.

ADREA: That's kind of obvious, though - unless he cut his own throat. So, just tell me so we can go back and get married.

KERIDES: There was more than one person on board - a lot more. The way the fish were trampled - and the different sizes of the footprints on the fish - say that there were at least four or five men aboard. The blade that cut his throat was long and heavy - it cut through with one blow. I would say it was a sword rather than a knife.

ADREA: A sword?

KERIDES: And the holes in the boat - look how the wood is pushing outwards. If it had hit rocks, the wood would have been forced inwards. No, men boarded this boat, killed the fisherman and holed the boat then left it to sink.

ADREA: Why would they do that?

KERIDES: I don't know. But fishermen don't carry swords and they don't leave a full catch of fish behind so it wasn't a rival fisherman, and crimes of passion tend to be frenzied. This was a single hard blow rather than a flurry of wounds. I wonder... if there are bruises on his arms...

FX: CLOTH BEING MOVED.

ADREA: How did you know his arms would be bruised?

KERIDES: Look at the shape of the bruises. Do they look like anything to you?

ADREA: Apart from bruises?

KERIDES: Imagine hands gripping his arms. Wouldn't they leave bruises like that?

ADREA: Those could be the thumbs... So someone else held him while one person killed him.

KERIDES: And then they left his boat to sink.

ADREA: So why didn't it sink?

KERIDES: There's water in the bottom but not a lot - it must have been pushed to shore by the tide before it could sink. Which means we have an idea of where the attack took place.

ADREA: We do?

KERIDES: If the tide pushed it this way...

ADREA: We go against the direction of the tide. And someone - probably you because you're so smart - can give a maximum amount of time the boat was at sea.

KERIDES: Exactly - and thank you for calling me smart.

ADREA: Well, I'm not marrying somebody stupid.

KERIDES: Come on.

ADREA: Where are we going? To find the killers?

KERIDES: Back to the palace. We have guests to see.

SECOND COMMERCIAL

FX: PARTY SOUNDS. THE MARRIAGE WITHIN THE PALACE.

AMARNA: Any sign of them, General?

KARNAK: No. They're not in the room where Kerides was preparing.

MENTEP: Neither of them?

KARNAK: It was empty.

MENTEP: You don't think they changed their minds, do you?

AMARNA: They wouldn't dare.

MENTEP: I beg your pardon?

AMARNA: Nothing, sir.

MENTEP: I'm sure there's nothing to worry about.

KARNAK: There they are. Though why they're coming in from the front entrance...

MENTEP: My boy, we were concerned about you.

AMARNA: But the vizier was right. There was nothing to worry about.

KERIDES: I think there's a great deal to worry about.

KARNAK: I'm guessing you're not suddenly afraid of marriage.

KERIDES: No, General. We should talk away from this place.

KARNAK: Your preparation room.

MENTEP: Amarna, come with us.

FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN. FOOTSTEPS ENTER.

KARNAK: All right, Thinker. What's important enough to stop my drinking?

KERIDES: There's been a murder.

KARNAK: Unfortunately, that's not uncommon in Alexandria.

MENTEP: What was so unusual about it, Kerides?

ADREA: A fisherman had his throat cut and someone tried to sink his boat.

KARNAK: That's too bad for the fisherman but it should be handled by the city guard.

KERIDES: But that's not all of it.

ADREA: Well, if you'd told me the whole story instead of hurrying me back here - although I'm glad to be here, what with the marriage and everything. Remember the marriage?

KERIDES: I'm not going to forget it.

ADREA: Just checking. Now - can we get the fisherman out of the way? And did that sound as cold as I think it did?

AMARNA: Yes.

ADREA: Sorry, I didn't mean it like that. Kerides?

KERIDES: The boat was at sea when it was attacked and boarded. The fisherman was held by two men and his throat cut by another. They smashed holes in the side of the boat and left it to sink.

ADREA: But the tide brought it to shore before it had time to sink. I remember that bit.

KERIDES: That's right.

KARNAK: That's all unpleasant enough but I'm still not sure why it has you so concerned.

KERIDES: Yesterday, we were all taken prisoner by Medanes.

AMARNA: Not all - only the men.

ADREA: That's not helpful, mother.

MENTEP: But it's true. You think the fisherman's death is linked to Medanes? His plan was to burn Alexandria and the palace to the ground with jars of pitch.

KARNAK: And we stopped that.

KERIDES: But that wouldn't be enough to bring Egypt to its knees.

MENTEP: It would destroy trade, damage our economy.

KERIDES: But we would recover. He would need soldiers to occupy Alexandria after the fire. To kill the government and wipe out what was left of the army.

KARNAK: That makes sense. Wait for the fire to run its course and then sweep in and wipe out any opposition.

KERIDES: The fisherman's throat was cut by a sword. Soldiers carry swords, not fishermen.

KARNAK: You're taking some pretty big leaps in there, young Thinker.

KERIDES: I know, but...

MENTEP: But it all makes sense.

KARNAK: I agree. And I wish I didn't. If we knew where they landed...

ADREA: We know where they attacked the fishing boat. Don't we, Kerides?

KARNAK: You do?

KERIDES: Roughly, yes.

KARNAK: If I ask how, will the answer be long and boring?

KERIDES: Probably.

KARNAK: Then I won't ask. There should be a map in here somewhere...

FX: PAPER SHUFFLED.

KARNAK: Here. Show me.

KERIDES: The tide pushed the boat in this direction. Which means it must have been against the current out in this direction.

KARNAK: That makes sense.

ADREA: And it didn't have time to sink...

KERIDES: Which means it must have been holed not too far from shore.

FX: FINGER ON PAPER, POINTING OR JABBING.

KERIDES: Around here.

KARNAK: If I was bringing a force of men to attack Alexandria, that would be a good place to bring them ashore. Lots of little inlets, hidden from sight by this curve of land here. It would take days to search them all.

KERIDES: It's just a theory.

MENTEP: Karnak?

KARNAK: It's a theory that makes my gut ache. There's one person in this palace who knows if it's true or not. We're going to the dungeons.

FX: DANK SOUNDS, WATER DRIPS. CHAINS CLANK.

ADREA: This really isn't how I expected to spend my wedding day.

KARNAK: You didn't have to come, Adrea.

ADREA: Let you three out of my sight again? Not a chance.

KARNAK: This is his cell. Wait out here.

ADREA: But...

KERIDES: Don't argue, Adrea. I want you to do something for me.

FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

KARNAK: Medanes, I hope my men have made your stay uncomfortable.

MEDANES: (OBVIOUSLY IN PAIN)
Torture is the Egyptian way.

KARNAK: You should stand when you talk to us.

MENTEP: I think standing would hurt a good deal given that he doesn't seem to have any toenails left.

FX: KARNAK HAULS MEDANES TO HIS FEET.

MEDANES: (A PAINED YELL)

KARNAK: I don't care. You stand in the presence of Pharaoh's vizier. I'll give you credit Medanes. Most people would have broken to my torturers by now. Two days is a long time here.

MEDANES: Two days? I lose track of time. Your hospitality is too kind.

MENTEP: It's almost as if he expects to be rescued.

KARNAK: We know you have soldiers landing. If you tell us how many and where they're landing, I'll let you live. If you don't, you won't see tomorrow morning.

FX: MEDANES SPITS.

KARNAK: That's the stupidest answer you could have given.

KERIDES: Do you know how you'll be tortured here? Your teeth will be ripped out one by one. You will have your feet forced onto burning coals. Your bones will be broken one at a time. Finally, you will have your gut sliced open and live beetles forced inside. They'll eat you alive from inside as they try to escape.

MEDANES: You are savages.

KARNAK: You tried to burn a city and its people to ash. You have no right to call anyone a savage.

(VERY MENACING)

The only thing you have a right to do is tell us what we want to know, and maybe stop me having a lot of fun ripping the answers from you.

MEDANES: I'll tell you nothing.

KARNAK: Bring me burning coals. We'll make sure you don't feel the cold.

FX: DOOR THROWN OPEN.

ADREA: (BREATHLESS)
Kerides! Kerides!

KERIDES: What is it, Adrea?

ADREA: General, your soldiers have been attacked?

KARNAK: What?

ADREA: You had a squad of two hundred men marching back from the dead lands along the coast. They were attacked. Only two survived.

KARNAK: Where are they?

ADREA: They can't talk. They're unconscious. But they don't have to - there's an army marching on Alexandria. And there are ships.

KERIDES: General, we only have two thousand men in the city. The rest are three days to the east.

MEDANES: We outnumber you two to one.

KARNAK: Gods! How could they be so close without us seeing them?

KERIDES: They must have chosen their hiding place well.

KARNAK: (LAUGHING)
Because you are too afraid to go there. But we have no fear.

KERIDES: Afraid? In the area we looked at on the map - is there a place there that's associated with fear?

KARNAK: The Bay of Lost Souls. It must be.

MEDANES: What?

KARNAK: When I said you'd been here two days? I lied.

MENTEP: You have been here only one day... we needed to find a way to bring information from you. Kerides, your little ruse worked, And Adrea, you played your part beautifully, my dear.

ADREA: Thank you.

KARNAK: You told us enough to know where to find your men - and how many there are.

MENTEP: General, prepare your men.

KARNAK: Understood - and Medanes, I lied about how many men I have - we have ten thousand men.

MEDANES: No! NNOOOO!

MENTEP: General, protect Alexandria.

THIRD COMMERCIAL

FX: MARCHING FOOTSTEPS.

KARNAK: Get those men moving!

ADREA: That looks like every man in Alexandria.

KERIDES: Every man except one. And I'm going to have to put that right.

ADREA: What?

KERIDES: General, if you could use another sword, I'm with you.

KARNAK: You're no use to me in the city, Thinker. Get mounted up.

ADREA: Kerides, are you crazy? You're not a soldier.

KERIDES: But this city is my home. And if I protect my city, I protect you.

ADREA: I don't know what to say.

KERIDES: That's a first.

ADREA: You can say that when we're married.

KERIDES: I will.

ADREA: And just make sure you come back safe so we can actually get married.

KERIDES: I'll do my best. Vizier Mentep, would you look after Adrea while we're gone,
please?

MENTEP: I'm afraid I can't do that, my boy. I'm going with you.

KARNAK: Have you lost your mind?

MENTEP: I won't get involved in the fighting - but I will represent Pharaoh's authority.

KARNAK: I don't have time to argue.
(CALLING)
Captain of the guard - start moving!

FX: MARCHING FEET.

ADREA: Kerides... be careful and... oh never mind. I'll tell you on the way.

FX: ADREA CLIMBING.

KERIDES: Adrea, what are you doing? Get off the horse.

KARNAK: Move out! Double-time the march. Pick up the speed.

ADREA: We can stay here and argue or we can go to the battle.

KERIDES: You're impossible.

ADREA: I know.

KERIDES: All right. Hold tight. Hya!

FX: HORSE GALLOPS AWAY.

AMARNA: Take care, my daughter.

FX: ARMY'S MARCHING FEET. HORSES WALKING.

KARNAK: I have to give them credit, Mentep. They've chosen a good spot to hide out.

MENTEP: Indeed.

KERIDES: I assume there's a reason it's called the
Bay of Lost Souls?

MENTEP: Most definitely.

KARNAK: It may look beautiful but the currents drive ships onto rocks that are only visible at
low tide.

ADREA: And wild animals are supposed to scavenge the beach for the dead, so people stay
clear. See? I know some things.

KARNAK: It also has a good clear view in all directions so there's no chance of a sneak attack
on them. The best we can do is dismount and move slowly to kick up as little dust as we
can.

MENTEP: But have no doubt, they will be firmly dug in when we get there.

KARNAK: And they will have an escape route to the sea.

ADRERA: Didn't you send ships?

KARNAK: We need our ships to defend the harbour if there's an attack. No, the best we can
hope for today is that they take some losses before they retreat.

ADREA: But they'll be able to come back.

KARNAK: And we'll be waiting.

FX: DISTANT GALLOPING.

KERIDES: That looks like a scout coming back.

ADREA: And in a hurry.

FX: HORSE GALLOPS UP AND STOPS.

KARNAK: Soldier. Soldier.

FX: SCOUT GROANS, SLUMPING ON HIS HORSE.

KERIDES: He's hurt. I've got him.

KARNAK: Two arrows in his back.

KERIDES: He has lost a good deal of blood but I don't think it's fatal.

KARNAK: Captain, get this man tended - and bring me every word he says.

MENTEP: I think we know what he'll say.

ADREA: And it's not good, is it?

KERIDES: They shot our scout, so they know we're coming.

MENTEP: They'll be waiting.

KARNAK: Then we won't keep them waiting long - and I swear we'll put the fear of whatever gods they worship right into their hearts. Captains, form your men into ranks. Stand by to attack!

FX: MARCHING FEET.

KARNAK: Forward!

FX: MARCHING FEET - A REALLY POTENT, AGGRESSIVE SOUND.

KARNAK: You should hold to the back, Mentep.

MENTEP: As vizier, I must be there to give you Pharaoh's authority to go to war.

KARNAK: They attacked my scout. They tried to burn Alexandria. We're already at war.

MENTEP: Then it's just as well I brought my sword, isn't it?

KERIDES: General! Up ahead in the rocks.

KARNAK: I see them.

ADREA: What is it?

KERIDES: At a guess... archers.

FX: A VOLLEY OF ARROWS THROUGH THE AIR.

ADREA: Why do you have to be so good at guessing?

KARNAK: Lift your shields!

FX: THE ARROWS THUD INTO THE GROUND.

KERIDES: We're out of range of their archers.

ADREA: Just.

KARNAK: I'll take my archers over theirs any day of the year. Archers forward.

FX: ARCHERS MOVE INTO POSITION. SCUFFING GROUND.

KARNAK: Fire!

FX: A VOLLEY OF ARROWS WHISTLE AWAY.

ADREA: Did we get them?

KERIDES: Some of the arrows reached the rocks but I can't tell if any of them were hit.

KARNAK: But our bows reach a good thirty paces further than theirs. That should keep them at bay.

ADREA: So it's a stand-off.

KARNAK: For now, but they're on the back foot.

ADREA: Then why aren't they running away?

KARNAK: Because their position is strong and we all know it.

ADREA: So we could be like this for days?

KARNAK: Possibly. Though I don't like this number of enemy troops so close to Alexandria. Not one bit.

KERIDES: I wonder...

KARNAK: Wonder what?

KERIDES: It's just an idea.

ADREA: You're being secretive - so I know it's good.

MENTEP: What are you thinking, my boy?

KERIDES: I'm thinking of wine jars and wind.

FOURTH COMMERCIAL

FX: BREEZE.

KARNAK: That's your idea? Wine and wind?

ADREA: My master used to get terrible wind after he had wine. I felt sorry for his wife. I'm amazed she could sleep.

(BEAT)

That's not the kind of wind you mean, is it?

KERIDES: Not really, no.

ADREA: But just so you know - there'll be none of that when we're married. If we ever get married. If it's not done by the time the sun sets we have to delay it.

KARNAK: I think Egypt's safety comes before your marriage.

ADREA: I know - but you can tell my mother.

MENTEP: I think we're getting away from Kerides' idea.

KERIDES: Yes. Yesterday, when Medanes planned to burn Alexandria, he had wine-jars full of pitch. A lot of them.

KARNAK: Go on.

KERIDES: In the afternoons here, the wind usually changes direction, so it comes from... roughly behind us and blows out to sea. Pitch burns with a heavy, thick smoke when certain oils and potions are added to it. If we set the pitch alight and let the wind blow at the enemy soldiers, they won't be able to see us move, and breathing will become difficult for them.

KARNAK: A blind enemy choking on his own smoke? I like that.

MENTEP: So do I. I'll have word sent to bring the jars of pitch. Tell me what should be added to it, Kerides.

FX: QUICK MUSIC BRIDGE.
CART PUSHED INTO PLACE, WIND BLOWING.

KARNAK: How many jars of pitch do we have?

MENTEP: Thirty.

KARNAK: And the wind has changed direction just like the Thinker said.

MENTEP: Smart boy. Kerides, this is your plan.

KARNAK: Give the orders, Thinker.

KERIDES: I'm not in the army, General.

KARNAK: You are now. Give the orders.

KERIDES: Oh. All right.
 (CALLING)
 Push the jars out towards the enemy, please.

KARNAK: Kerides, come here.

KERIDES: General?

KARNAK: (QUIETLY)
 You're in command of these men. You don't ask them to do something - you tell them.

KERIDES: I'm not sure I...

KARNAK: Think of how Adrea tells you to do things when she's in a bad mood. Go with that.

ADREA: Was I just insulted?

MENTEP: No - you just helped Kerides in an unusual way.

ADREA: Sounded like an insult to me.

KARNAK: Get to it, Thinker.

KERIDES: (STRONGER, MORE POWERFUL)
 Get these jars out there. Push them towards the enemy - and do it now. Stay just out of range

of their archers but move those jars.

KARNAK: He's got potential.

KERIDES: Spread the pitch out. Make sure it's in thick pools.

FX: PITCH SLOPS OUT.

KERIDES: Go further to the sides. We need it to cover as much ground as possible.

FX: PITCH SPILLING, SLOPPING.

KERIDES: It only needs a torch set to it.

KARNAK: Then do it.

KERIDES: Soldier, give me the torch,

FX: FLAMING TORCH CRACKLES.

KERIDES: Here goes.

FX: THE PITCH BURSTS INTO FLAME.

ADREA: That's quick.

KARNAK: Good.
(CALLING)
Men, stand ready.

KERIDES: General, we still have ten jars of pitch.

KARNAK: So?

KERIDES: It's a pity to waste them.

KARNAK: Make it quick.

KERIDES: If we set flame to the jars and ran both the carts downhill into the rocks, they'd have to give up their position.

KARNAK: Do it.

ADREA: How will we know if the enemy give up their position?

MENTEP: We have scouts positioned to the side. They'll tell us if the enemy take to their

ships.

ADREA: They can see the ships as well?

MENTEP: They'd be useless if they couldn't.

ADREA: Could they reach the ships with arrows?

MENTEP: Possibly but they would only cause a few casualties.

KARNAK: I see where she's going with this. Arrows tipped with burning pitch?

ADREA: Ships are made of wood.

KARNAK: Save two jars of pitch. Mentep, you wanted to be involved - you take command of the archers.

MENTEP: Yes, General.

(LOUDER THAN USUAL)

Captain, I want your two finest squads of archers. One on either side of the enemy. A jar of pitch for each squad.

KARNAK: I swear he's enjoying it.

KERIDES: And so are you.

KARNAK: Defending Egypt? It's what I live for.

ADREA: I'll go with Mentep. Somebody needs to keep an eye on him.

KERIDES: Be careful.

ADREA: You too.

KERIDES: Adrea... I... you know what I mean.

ADREA: I know you love me - but you can tell me later.

KARNAK: She has a soldier's spirit.

KERIDES: She does.

KARNAK: Now stop thinking about her and get on with your job.

KERIDES: Set a torch to the jars of pitch still in the carts. Make sure the fire has hold.

FX: FLAMES CATCHING.

KERIDES: Now push! Push them downhill at the enemy. As hard as you can.

FX: CARTS TRUNDLE.

KARNAK: Good work. Are you ready for the real fight, Thinker?

KERIDES: Do I have a choice?

KARNAK: Not a chance.
(CALLING)
Stand ready...

FX: CARTS CRASH. ERUPTION OF FLAME. MEN SCREAMING.

KERIDES: The pitch has hit.

KARNAK: And that smoke means they can't see a thing.
(CALLING)
ATTACK! CHARGE THEM!

FX: THE BELLOW AND RUSHING FEET OF CHARGING SOLDIERS.

FX: SCRAPE OF JAR BEING MOVED. THE BELLOW OF THE CHARGING
SOLDIERS IS HEARD, SLIGHTLY QUIETER.

ADREA: They're attacking.

MENTEP: Kerides will be all right, my dear. Have faith.

ADREA: I love him.

MENTEP: I know. But if you're to tell him that, we must win the day. Archers, dip your arrows in pitch then set them alight. Once they have a good flame, set that enemy fleet ablaze. Burn them into the sea.

FX: GLOP OF PITCH. FLAMES CATCHING.

MENTEP: Fire!

FX: ARROWS FLY OUT.

ADREA: There's an extra bow, Mentep. You should have it.

MENTEP: My arm is too weak to reach their ships now. But we could use every bow - Adrea, you take it.

ADREA: I never fired one.

MENTEP: Do as the archers do, aim at the enemy and let it go.

ADREA: This is definitely not how I planned to spend today! Oh, all right.

FX: BOW LIFTED. ARROW FLAMES.

MENTEP: Pull back - now let go.

FX: ARROW FLIES.

ADREA: I did it!

MENTEP: Good, child - now do it again! Keep firing till their fleet is ash!

FX: ARROWS FLY.

FX: SOUNDS OF BATTLE. SWORDS CLASH.

KARNAK: (CUTTING ONE DOWN)
They fight well.

KERIDES: Behind you General.

FX: A SWISH, A SCREAM.

KARNAK: Got him. Good eyes, Thinker.

KERIDES: They're retreating to the shore.

KARNAK: They're running. To your right.

FX: BLADES CLASH. ANOTHER SWING, A SCREAM OF PAIN.

KARNAK: You're improving. Your trainer knows his business.

KERIDES: That would be you.

KARNAK: I never claimed to be modest!

(CALLING)
ATTACK! Drive them back!

FX: BATTLE.

-
FX: ARROWS FLYING.

MENTEP: The enemy are broken. They're running to the sea.

ADREA: Their fleet is burning. They can't escape.

MENTEP: They have to choose - surrender or die.

FX: A BELLOW OF RAGE.

ADREA: Mentep!

MENTEP: Uh?

FX: THE CLASH OF SWORDS. A SWORD HITTING STONE.

MENTEP: My sword.

ADREA: Leave him alone.

MENTEP: Get back, child.

FX: ARROW FIRED. YELL OF PAIN.

MENTEP: Adrea?

ADREA: (SHOCKED - SHE STAYS SHOCKED THROUGH THE SCENE)
I... he was going to kill you.

MENTEP: Thank you, my dear.

ADREA: Is he dead?

MENTEP: Quite dead.

ADREA: I never killed anyone before.

MENTEP: I'm very glad you did, my dear. Or I would be dead now.

ADREA: I know. But it still feels...

MENTEP: I know. Come along, my dear. I think the battle is done.

FX: AFTERMATH OF BATTLE. MOANS, SCREAMS OF PAIN.

KARNAK: Stack their weapons! Archers, keep your arrows aimed at the prisoners. If they try to escape, cut them down.

KERIDES: How many of them died before they surrendered?

KARNAK: Not enough. Does that sound harsh?

KERIDES: A few days ago I would have said yes. Now, I don't think so. They tried to kill us all.

KARNAK: You're hurt.

KERIDES: What?

KARNAK: Your arm - and your side.

KERIDES: I didn't notice.

MENTEP: (HURRYING TO THEM)
You're both safe.

KARNAK: A few cuts. The Thinker is a little worse than me. You survived.

MENTEP: Thanks to Adrea. She took one of their soldiers with a single arrow as he was about to slay me.

KARNAK: Maybe I should bring her into the army as well. What do you say, Thinker?

KERIDES: Adrea? Are you all right?

ADREA: I killed a man, Kerides. I looked at him and killed him.

KERIDES: It'll be all right.

ADREA: I don't regret doing it. I just wish I hadn't had to.

KARNAK: Well said.

ADREA: You're hurt.

KERIDES: I didn't notice. I think I was caught in the battle.

ADREA: (AFFECTIONATELY)
I can't leave you for a moment, can I? Come on, let me tend those.

KARNAK: I can leave my men to tidy up here and bring the prisoners in. Let's go back to the palace.

MENTEP: We may still have time for a marriage.

FIFTH COMMERCIAL

FX: HORSES CLOP TO A SLOW HALT.

AMARNA: Adrea, you're safe.

ADREA: More or less. Help me get Kerides down.

KERIDES: I'm fine.

ADREA: No, you're not. Your arm needs tended and your side is covered in blood.

KERIDES: It does ache a little.

ADREA: Don't be brave for me. I know it hurts.

MENTEP: Kerides, are you well enough to be married today?

ADREA: It's too late. The sun has gone down. We'll have to wait.

MENTEP: We'll see about that. Karnak, with me. We're going to report to Pharaoh. Amarna, get those two ready to be married.

AMARNA: Yes sir.

FX: HARP MUSIC - OR SOMETHING EQUALLY SIMPLE. A WATERFALL WOULD BE EQUALLY SOOTHING.

MENTEP: Egypt has won a great battle this day. The forces who would have destroyed our city and burned us into the sand have been brought to swift justice. Our armies, led by General Karnak, put our enemies to the sword. By order of the General, one of the great heroes of the day is named Captain Kerides. And his betrothed, Adrea, for saving my life and showing immense courage and nobility, General Karnak could not bring you into the army, but I can bring you into my family. From this day, with the blessing of your mother, you are in my family. You are my daughter. Come forward both of you.

FX: FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: Mentep, I don't know what to say.

MENTEP: It is a small thank you for my life, child. And you, Captain Kerides... that may be the swiftest promotion in the army's history.

KERIDES: I'm shocked.

KARNAK: That was my gift to you, Thinker. It means you might actually do what I tell you sometimes. And don't worry - you can still study. The only thing that's changed is you get better pay and more men have to salute you.

KERIDES: Thank you... sir.

MENTEP: There is one gift still to be given - a marriage gift to you both.

ADREA: The marriage can't go ahead - the sun has set.

MENTEP: By order of Mighty Pharaoh Ptolemy, to celebrate our great victory, the sun shall not go down on this day. As long as torches burn in celebration of our victory, the flame of the sun still burns. And you two can be married.

ADREA: We can?

MENTEP: Do you want to argue with Pharaoh?

ADREA: No. Really, no. Not at all.

KERIDES: Neither do I.

MENTEP: Take her hand, Kerides.

KERIDES: Yes.

MENTEP: As father of this woman, I give her to you, Kerides. Take her to your home, your bed, your heart. Love her, protect her and remember that you will find strength and purpose in her and in the family she will bring you.

KERIDES: I will, Mentep.

MENTEP: And you, Adrea... my daughter. Cherish him, support him, love him and together make your family grow.

ADREA: I will.

MENTEP: And if he gets out of line, whip him back into shape.

ADREA: I definitely will!

KERIDES: And I thought you liked me, Mentep.

MENTEP: I do, my boy. That why I take so much joy in announcing you and Adrea to be married. Be good to each other.

AMARNA: Take care of my daughter, Kerides. And be happy, both of you.

KERIDES: We will.

MENTEP: General Karnak... do you have something in your eye?

KARNAK: Sand from the battle earlier. It'll blink its way out.

MENTEP: My friends, my family. We have much to celebrate.

FX: A COCK CROWS.
KERIDES GROANS SLEEPILY.

ADREA: Good morning, husband.

KERIDES: Good morning, wife.

ADREA: Does that sound as strange to you as it does to me?

KERIDES: We'll get used to it.

ADREA: I could get used to this - living in the palace.

KERIDES: I could ask Pharaoh to sell it to me - I just got a pay rise.

ADREA: Neah. It would take too long to clean.

KERIDES: Don't make me laugh, please. My side hurts.

ADREA: Then you're staying here all day, and I'll look after you.

FX: DOOR THROWN OPEN.

AMARNA: Kerides! Adrea! Quickly.

ADREA: Mother! Couldn't you at least knock? We're nak... we don't have any... oh, why do I bother?

KERIDES: What's wrong, Amarna?

AMARNA: Vizier Mentep and General Karnak... they want to see you both in the council chamber.

ADREA: Both of us?

AMARNA: That's what he said.

ADREA: Give us a minute to get dressed.

-
FX: LOW, WORRIED CHAT. BURNING TORCHES.
FOOTSTEPS HURRY.

MENTEP: You got them, thank you, Amarna.

AMARNA: Yes, sir.

MENTEP: Don't go far, Amarna. I'm so sorry to have disturbed you two today of all days.

KERIDES: What's wrong?

KARNAK: Riders arrived in Alexandria during the night.

ADREA: What did they say? Somehow I get the feeling it wasn't congratulations on our marriage.

MENTEP: Four of our towns have been attacked.

ADREA: What?

KERIDES: Which four?

KARNAK: They're all in or on the border of the lands disputed with the Greeks of Antiochus Soter.

KERIDES: So the attack on Alexandria was only part of a bigger campaign.

KARNAK: Exactly.

MENTEP: As of this morning, Egypt is at war.

UNTIL DEATH DO US PART

Notes

And there we have it, my dears. Kerides and Adrea are finally married... just in time for Egypt to go war... and that's what the next six stories are about. The war between Egypt and the Antiochus Soter's Greek army. There are some surprises coming in there, we promise you.

But some detail about 'Until Death Do Us Part'. A lot of TV shows have built up to weddings and then either blown the storyline or blown the wedding. *The New Adventures of Superman* (that's *Lois And Clark* for some of us) really botched the first wedding storyline they did and it damaged the show, I'm sure of it. Even *Babylon 5* which is as close to my idea of TV heaven as you can imagine... they didn't show us Sheridan and Delenn's wedding. Maybe I'm an old romantic but I damn sure wanted this wedding to happen and for the audience to share it. They waited 15 episodes over eight years... the audience earned the wedding.

So, once we had decided that we were having the wedding, Claire and I had to work out what we were doing with it. This is why working out several stories in advance is so useful. We always knew Kerides and Adrea were getting married but the exact details of it... we had to come to them in due course. And this was the time. Well, if you've built up to something like this, and asked the audience to with you on the characters' journey, you have to be willing to take time to pay that off. So, the story had to be bigger than usual. Earlier, we had done a double length story, 'Return of the Queen', which had worked very well. So, that meant we could do another double length episode for the wedding. However, an hour of a wedding... that's dull radio drama. We needed more. We needed something big to put the wedding in serious jeopardy – something that would be a genuine threat to it happening. We had always planned on taking Egypt to war with Soter's Greece... what could be a bigger threat to the marriage than Egypt being attacked? That gave us the impetus for these three stories and a lead into the next half dozen... but we were damn sure still having the marriage. So, we had to have an opening salvo of the battle, but one that brought real jeopardy to the characters. So we went for a battle and we threw our characters straight into the middle of it, we went back to the episode preceding this one and rewrote the plot so that the two episode could almost be run together as one story. We both think the battle was played out in a satisfying way and that the wedding was both romantic and in keeping with all of the regular characters... and then we dropped the bombshell that Egypt was at war. Why did we do that? Why didn't we finish with the marriage and save the declaration of war for the start of the next episode? Why undermine the happy ending? Mostly because we didn't want anyone to think this was the end for Kerides and Adrea. Often, a marriage marks the end of the story. And they all lived happily ever after. This isn't the end for Kerides and Adrea. Not by a long way. They still have a lot on front of them and we wanted to signpost that at the end of the marriage story.

Something I'd really like to flag up about this story and the previous double episode, 'Return of the Queen', is that both had extensive battle scenes in the, involving vast armies in conflict. The production on these stories belies the fact that some rather epic battles were created on audio by a very small cast. Look at the number of characters in this story – half a dozen but it still feels enormous. I would love to claim all credit for that for Claire and myself... but we can't. Kudos for that has to do to producer and director Jim French and Larry Albert, who made things sound far grander than we ever hoped it would sound. They do great work every single week on Imagination Theater. Check out their website and try some of their other series. On top of that, they're really good guys.

Kerides The Thinker can be heard on Imagination Theater at **www.jimfrenchproductions.com**. Every episode produced to date is available either in a box set or as downloads. Each episode is available individually to download for, at time of publishing, \$1.99.

For those who prefer their plays on CD, Volume One contains the first six episodes of the series and Volume Two has the next five episodes, including the double length Return of the Queen.

Details of Imagination Theater's productions of Kerides The Thinker and how they can be obtained are available at **www.jimfrenchproductions.com**.

REGULAR CAST

Ulric Dihle as Kerides

Sarah Schenkkan as Adrea

Stephen Weyte as Mentep

David White and Steve Manning both played General Karnak

Each episode of Kerides the Thinker is produced by Jim French and directed by Larry Albert.

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